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One Hundred Revival Sermons and Outlines

COMPILED BY

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INTRODUCTION.

The compiling of one hundred revival sermons and outlines proved to be a much more difficult task than compiling my former volume, One Hundred Best Sermons of the Nineteenth Century. That there was no such collection in existence led me to persevere in the face of discouraging advice from many friends. Many were of the opinion of Dr. Gunsaulus, who said: "I do not think that a powerful revival sermon could be written in all its appeal and urgency. Perhaps there are many such, but I have not read them. The greatest revival sermon I ever heard was by a country minister, totally forgotten except by my own grateful self."

We readily agree that "all the appeal and urgency" cannot be reproduced in type, but some of it—a great deal may be reproduced, especially to the reader, whose heart and mind are in unison with the writer.

Many preachers will not put into writing their revival sermons, and some believe that as little preparation as possible be given to revival sermons. It has been well said concerning this attitude that the Spirit places no premium on carelessness nor laziness.

There were five requests for the use of Moody's Sowing and Reaping. J. Wilbur Chapman wrote: "The sermon which made the most profound impression upon me, I heard preached in the old Farwell Hall in Chicago by D. L. Moody, when I was a student in 1878, that one which has been so closely identified with him in his appeals to men, and was entitled 'Sowing and Reaping,'" Dan F. Bradley said it was also the strongest revival sermon he ever heard preached. Russell H. Conwell's opinion was for the sermon on Heaven by Moody.

Next to Moody's sermons those of Spurgeon were suggested. W. G. Moorehead said of the sermon by Spurgeon, which he recommended, that it followed him for weeks in his travels through foreign lands. There were several requests for W. J. Dawson's sermon, "To the Uttermost," "Three Fires," by R. A. Torrey was suggested by two

Including the sermons of the early fathers and the reformers in a collection of revival sermons, may seem at first thought an anachronism but on reading them it will be found that they possess every element of the modern revival sermon except possibly sensationalism. What preacher preparing for a revival sermon would not be the stronger for his work were he imbued with the spirit of Savonarola in his fearless denunciation of public and personal sins. Or what preacher in closing an appeal to sinners, could not make it irresistible with the thought of the subject of Christlieb's wonderful sermon, on "Let me alone—or the great God in the hands of a man."

Many a pastor would undertake the special meetings for his church unaided by an evangelist were he supplied with the inspiration, encouragement and suggestive thoughts he may gain from others. Spurgeon made a special selection of twelve of his sermons which had been found most effective in reaching souls and invited their use by others. The following story (I cannot vouch for its authority) is told of Beecher and Emerson: The former dining with the philosopher asked if a chemist could determine what kind of grass the ox had eaten which they were dining on. Emerson thought he could not. Beecher simulated a sigh of relief and said that he could continue reading the works of his friend.

There are several ways in which I trust this compiliation will be used. A preacher would do well to take his own medicine and read a sermon every week for his own profit. If he reads a revival sermon every week he will find his evangelistic tone growing stronger. In preparation for special meetings I hope he will "Gather gear by every wile that's justified by honor," from this work. Take these thoughts, pour them into the crucible of your mind and make them your own. Eat these words, digest them, and go forth into a series of special meetings with their inspiration. Lastly use these words—use a whole sermon if you wish. It is better when you have no thoughts of your own to use the thoughts of others. Certainly no man would do this without giving credit.

FREDERICK BARTON.

CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

Exodus xx: 4, Num. xxi: 8.

"For tell me, was it not God who commanded by Moses that no image or likeness of anything which was in heaven above or which was on the earth should be made. and yet who caused the brazen serpent to be made by Moses in the wilderness, and set it up for a sign by which those bitten by serpents were saved? Yet is he free from unrighteousness. For by this, as I previously remarked, he proclaimed the mystery, by which he declared that he would break the power of the serpent which occasioned the transgression of Adam, and (would bring) to them that believe on him (who was foreshadowed) by this sign, i. e., him who was crucified, salvation from the fangs of the serpent, which was wicked deeds, idolatries, and other unrighteous acts. Unless the matter be so understood, give me a reason why Moses set up the brazen serpent for a sign, and bade those who were bitten gaze at it, and the wounded were healed; and this, too, when he had himself commanded that no likeness of anything whatsoever should be made."

On this, another of those who came on the second day said, "You have spoken truly: we cannot give a reason. For I have frequently interrogated the teachers about this matter, and none of them gave me a reason: therefore continue what you are speaking; for we are paying attention while you unfold the mystery, on account of which the doctrines of the prophets are falsely slandered."

Then I replied, "Just as God commanded the sign to be made by the brazen serpent, and yet he is blameless; even so, though a curse lies in the law against persons who are crucified, yet no curse lies on the Christ of God, by whom all that have committed things worthy of a curse are saved.

"For the whole human race will be found to be under a curse. For it is written in the law of Moses, 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' And no one has accurately done all, nor will you venture to deny this; but some more and some less than others have observed the ordinances enjoined. But if those who are under this law appear to be under a curse for not having observed all the requirements, how much more shall all the nations appear to be under a curse who practice idolatry, who seduce youths, and commit other crimes? If, then, the Father of all wished his Christ for the whole human family to take upon him the curses of all, knowing that, after he had been crucified and was dead, he would raise him up, why do you argue about him, who submitted to suffer these things according to the Father's will, as if he were accursed, and do not rather bewail yourselves? For although his Father caused him to suffer these things in behalf of the human family, yet you do not commit the deed as in obedience to the will of God. For you did not practice piety when you slew the prophets. And let none of you say: If his Father wished him to suffer this, in order that by his stripes

the human race might be healed, we have done no wrong. If, indeed, you repent of your sins, and recognize him to be Christ, and observe his commandments, then you may assert this; for, as I have said before, remission of sins shall be yours. But if you curse him and them that believe on him, and, when you have the power, put them to death, how is it possible that requisition shall not be made of you, as of unrighteous and sinful men, altogether hard-hearted and without understanding, because you laid your hands on him?

"For the statement in the law, 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree,' confirms our hope which depends on the crucified Christ, not because he who has been crucified is cursed by God, but because God foretold that which would be done by you all, and by those like to you, who do not know that this is he who existed before all, who is the eternal Priest of God, and King, and Christ. And you clearly see that this has come to pass. For you curse in your synagogues all those who are called from him Christians; and other nations effectively carry out the curse, putting to death those who simply confess themselves to be Christians; to all of whom we say, You are our brethren; rather recognize the truth of God. And while neither they nor you are persuaded by us, but strive earnestly to cause us to deny the name of Christ, we choose rather and submit to death, in the full assurance that all the good which God has promised through Christ he will reward us with. And in addition to all this we pray for you, that Christ may have mercy upon you. For he taught us to pray for our enemies also, saying, 'Love your enemies; be kind and merciful, as your heavenly Father is.' For we see that the almighty God is kind and merciful, causing his sun to rise on the unthankful and on the righteous, and sending rain on the holy and on the wicked; all of whom he has taught us he will judge.

"For it was not without design that the prophet Moses, when Hur and Aaron upheld his hands, remained in this form until evening. For indeed the Lord remained upon the tree almost until evening, and they buried him at eventide; then on the third day he rose again. This was declared by David thus: 'With my voice I cried to the Lord, and he heard me out of his holy hill. I laid me down, and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.' And Isaiah likewise mentions concerning him the manner in which he would die, thus: 'I have spread out my hands unto a people disobedient, and gainsaying, that walk in a way which is not good.' And he would rise again, Isaiah himself said: 'His burial has been taken away from the midst, and I will give the rich for his death.' And again, in other words, David in the twenty-first Psalm thus refers to the suffering and to the cross in a parable of mystery: 'They pierced my hands and my feet; they counted all my bones. They considered and gazed on me; they parted my garments among themselves, and cast lots upon my vesture.' For when they crucified him, driving in the nails, they pierced his hands and feet; and those who crucified him parted his garments among themselves, each casting lots for what he chose to have, and receiving according to the decision of the lot. And this very Psalm you maintain does not refer to Christ; for you are in all respects blind, and do not understand that no one in your nation who has been called King or Christ has ever had his hands or feet pierced, or has died in this mysterious fashion—to-wit, by the cross—save this Jesus alone."—Writings of Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew.

[Justin the Martyr was born in Palestine, A. D. 96, and died A. D. 166. He was of Greek descent and was educated in heathen belief. The corruption of the time led him to seek truth from philosophy. While doing this he encountered a venerable Christian, who showed him that philosophy was not the greatest truth. The fortitude of Christian martyrs further impressed him and he became fully convinced of the saving grace of Christ. He was beheaded for advocating Christian beliefs and for denying Roman gods.—Lives of Church Leaders.]

CALLED FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

1 Thess. i:9; Gal. iv:3; 1 Cor. xiv:20; Heb. v:14; 1 Cor. ix:25.

Answer to the objection of the heathen, that it was not right to abandon the customs of their fathers.

But you may say it is not creditable to subvert the customs handed down to us from our fathers. And why, then, do we not still use our first nourishment, milk, to which our nurses accustomed us from the time of our birth? Why do we increase or diminish our patrimony, and not keep it exactly the same as we got it? Why do we not still vomit on our parents' breasts, or still do the things for which, when infants, and nursed by our mothers, we were laughed at, but have corrected ourselves, even if we did not fall in with good instructors? Then, if excesses in the indulgence of the passions, though pernicious and dangerous, yet are accompanied with pleasure, why do we not in the conduct of life abandon that usage which is evil, and provocative of passion, and godless, even should our fathers feel hurt, and betake ourselves to the truth, and seek him who is truly our Father, rejecting custom as a deleterious drug? For of all that I have undertaken to do, the task that I now attempt is the noblest, viz., to demonstrate to you how inimical this insane and most wretched custom is to godliness. For a boon so great, the greatest ever given by God to the human race, would never have been hated and rejected, had not you been carried away by custom, and then shut your ears against us; and just as unmanageable horses throw off the reins, and take the bit between their teeth, you rush away from the arguments addressed to you, in your eager desire to shake yourselves clear of us, who seek to guide the chariot of your life, and, impelled by your folly, dash towards the precipices of destruction, and regard the holy word of God as an accursed thing. The reward of your choice, therefore, as described by Sophocles, follows:

"The mind a blank, useless ears, vain thoughts."

And you know not that, of all truths, this is the truest, that the good and godly shall obtain the good reward, inasmuch as they held goodness in high esteem; while, on the other hand, the wicked shall receive meet punishment. For the author of evil, torment has been prepared; and so the prophet Zecharias threatens him: "He that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; lo, is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" What an infatuated desire, then, for voluntary death is this, rooted in men's minds! Why do they flee to this fatal brand, with which they shall be burned, when it is within their power to live nobly according to God, and not according to custom? For God bestows life freely; but evil custom after our departure from this world, brings on the sinner unavailing remorse with punishment. By sad experience, even a child knows how superstition destroys and piety saves. Let any of you look at those who minister before the idols, their hair matted, their persons disgraced with filthy and tattered clothes; who never come near a bath, and let their nails grow to an extraordinary length, like

wild beasts; many of them castrated, who show the idol's temples to be in reality graves or prisons. These appear to me to bewail the gods, not to worship them, and their sufferings to be worthy of pity rather than piety. And seeing these things, do you still continue blind, and will you not look up to the Ruler of all, the Lord of the universe? And will you not escape from those dungeons, and flee to the mercy that comes down from heaven? For God, of his great love to man, as the mother-bird flies to one of her young that has fallen out of the nest; and if a serpent open its mouth to swallow the little bird, "the mother flutters round, uttering cries of grief over her dear progeny;" and God the Father seeks his creature, and heals his transgression, and pursues the serpent, and recovers the young one, and incites it to fly up to the nest.

Thus dogs that have strayed, track out their master by the scent; and horses that have thrown their riders, come to their master's call if he but whistle. "The ox," it is said, "knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known me." What, then, of the Lord? He remembers not our ill desert; he still pities, he still urges us to repentance.

And I would ask you, if it does not appear to you monstrous, that you men who are God's handiwork, who have received your souls from him, and belong wholly to God, should be subject to another master, and, what is more, serve the tyrant instead of the rightful King—the evil one instead of the good? For, in the name of truth, what man in his senses turns his back on good, and attaches himself to evil? What, then, is he who flees from God to consort with demons? Who, that may become a son of God, prefers to be in bondage? Or who is he that pursues his way to Erebus, when it is in his power to be a citizen of heaven, and to cultivate Paradise, and walk about in heaven, and partake of the tree of life and immortality, and, cleaving his way through the sky in the track of the luminous cloud, behold, like Elias, the reign of salvation? Some there are, who, like worms wallowing in marshes and mud in the streams of pleasure, feed on foolish and useless delights—swinish men. For swine, it is said, like mud better than pure water; and, according to Democritus, "doat upon dirt."

Let us not then be enslaved or become swinish; but, as true children of the light, let us raise our eyes and look on the light, lest the Lord discover us to be spurious, as the sun does the eagles.

Let us therefore repent, and pass from ignorance to knowledge, from foolishness to wisdom, from licentiousness to self-restraint, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from godlessness to God. It is an enterprise of noble daring to take our way to God; and the enjoyment of many other good things is within the reach of the lovers of righteousness, who pursue eternal life, especially those things to which God himself alludes, speaking by Isaiah: "There is an inheritance for those who serve the Lord." Noble and desirable is this inheritance; not gold, not silver, not raiment, which the moth assails, and things of earth which are assailed by the robber, whose eye is dazzled by worldly wealth; but it is that treasure of salvation to which we must hasten, by becoming lovers of the Word. Thence praiseworthy works descend to us, and fly with us on the wing of truth. This is the inheritance with which the eternal covenant of God invests us, conveying the everlasting gift of grace; and thus our loving Father —the true Father—ceases not to exhort, admonish, train, love us. For he ceases not to save, and advises the best course: "Become righteous," says the Lord. Ye that thirst, come to the water; and ye that have no money, come, and buy and drink without money. He invites to the laver, to salvation, to illumination, all but crying out and saying, The land I give thee, and the sea, my child, and heaven, too; and all the living creatures in them I freely bestow upon thee. Only, O child, thirst for my Father; God shall be revealed to thee without price; the truth is not made merchandise

of. He gives thee all creatures that fly and swim, and those on the land. These the Father has created for thy thankful enjoyment. What the bastard, who is a son of perdition, foredoomed to be the slave of mammon, has to buy for money, he assigns to thee as thine own, even to his own son who loves the Father; for whose sake he still works, and to whom alone he promises, saying, "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity," for it is not destined to corruption. "For the whole land is mine;" and it is thine, too, if thou receive God. Wherefore the Scripture, as might have been expected, proclaims good news to those who have believed. "The saints of the Lord shall inherit the glory of God and his power." What glory, tell me, O blessed one, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man;" and "they shall be glad in the kingdom of their Lord forever and ever! Amen." You have, O men, the divine promise of grace; you have heard, on the other hand, the threatening of punishment: by these the Lord saves, teaching men by fear and grace. Why do we delay? Why do we not shun the punishment? Why do we not receive the free gift? Why, in fine, do we not choose the better part, God instead of the evil one, and prefer wisdom to idolatry, and take life in exchange for death? "Behold," he says, "I have set before your face death and life." The Lord tries you, that "you may choose life." He counsels you as a father to obey God. "For if ye hear me," he says, "and be willing, ye shall eat the good things of the land:" this is the grace attached to obedience. "But if ye obey me not, and are unwilling, the sword and fire shall devour you:" this is the penalty of disobedience. For the mouth of the Lord —the law of truth, the word of the Lord—hath spoken these things. Are you willing that I should be your good counselor? Well, do you hear? I, if possible, will explain. You ought, O men, when reflecting on the good, to have brought forward a witness inborn and competent, viz., faith, which of itself, and from its own resources, chooses at once what is best, instead of occupying yourselves in painfully inquiring whether what is best ought to be followed. For, allow me to tell you, you ought to doubt whether you should get drunk, but you get drunk before reflecting on the matter; and whether you ought to do an injury, but you do an injury with the utmost readiness. The only thing you make the subject of question is, whether God should be worshiped, and whether this wise God and Christ should be followed; and this you think requires deliberation and doubt, and know not what is worthy of God. Have faith in us, as you have in drunkenness, that you may be wise; have faith in us, as you have in injury, that you may live. But if, acknowledging the conspicuous trustworthiness of the virtues, you wish to trust them, come and I will set before you in abundance, materials of persuasion respecting the Word. But do you—for your ancestral customs, by which your minds are preoccupied, divert you from the truth,—do you now hear what is the real state of the case as follows.

And let not any shame of this name preoccupy you, which does great harm to men, and seduces them from salvation. Let us then openly strip for the contest, and nobly strive in the arena of truth, the holy Word being the judge, and the Lord of the universe prescribing the contest. For 'tis no insignificant prize, the guerdon of immortality which is set before us. Pay no more regard, then, if you are rated by some of the low rabble who lead the dance of impiety, and are driven on to the same pit by their folly and insanity, makers of idols and worshipers of stones. For these have dared to deify men,—Alexander of Macedon, for example, whom they canonized as the thirteenth god, whose pretensions Babylon confuted, which showed him dead. I admire, therefore, the divine sophist. Theocritus was his name. After Alexander's death, Theocritus, holding up the vain opinions entertained by men respecting the gods, to ridicule before his fellow-citizens, said: "Men, keep up your hearts as long as you see the gods dying sooner than men." And, truly, he who worships gods that are visible, and the promiscuous rabble of creatures begotten and born, and

attaches himself to them, is a far more wretched object than the very demons. For God is by no manner of means unrighteous, as the demons are, but in the very highest degree righteous; and nothing more resembles God than one of us when he becomes righteous in the highest possible degree:

> "Go into the way, the whole tribe of you handicraftsmen,
> Who worship Jove's fierce-eyed daughter, the working goddess,
> With fans duly placed, fools that ye are"—

fashioners of stone, and worshipers of them. Let your Phidias, and Polycletus, and your Praxiteles and Apelles, too, come, and all that are engaged in mechanical arts, who, being themselves of the earth, are workers of the earth. "For then," says a certain prophecy, "the affairs here turn out unfortunately, when men put their trust in images." Let the meaner artists, too—for I will not stop calling—come. None of these ever made a breathing image, or out of earth moulded soft flesh. Who liquefied the marrow? Or who solidified the bones? Who stretched the nerves? Who distended the veins? Who poured the blood into them? Or who spread the skin? Who ever could have made eyes capable of seeing? Who breathed spirit into the lifeless form? Who bestowed righteousness? Who promised immortality? The Maker of the universe alone: the Great Artist and Father has formed us, such a living image as man is. But your Olympian Jove, the image of an image, greatly out of harmony with truth, is the senseless work of Attic hands. For the image of God is his Word, the genuine Son of Man, the Divine Word, the archetypal light of light; and the image of the Word is the true man, the mind which is in man, who is therefore said to have been made "in the image and likeness of God," assimilated to the Divine Word in the affections of the soul, and therefore rational; but effigies sculptured in human form, the earthly image of that part of man which is visible and earth-born, are but a perishable impress of humanity, manifestly wide of the truth. That life, then, which is occupied with so much earnestness about matter, seems to me to be nothing else than full of insanity. And custom, which has made you taste bondage and unreasonable care, is fostered by vain opinion; and ignorance, which has proved to the human race the cause of unlawful rites and delusive shows, and also of deadly plagues and hateful images, has, by devising many shapes of demons, stamped on all that follow it the mark of long-continued death. Receive, then, the water of the word; wash, ye polluted ones; purify yourselves from custom, by sprinkling yourselves with the drops of truth. The pure must ascend to heaven. Thou art a man, if we look to that which is most common to thee and others—seek him who created thee; thou art a son, if we look to that which is thy peculiar prerogative—acknowledge thy Father. But do you still continue in your sins, engrossed with pleasures? To whom shall the Lord say, "Yours is the kingdom of heaven?" Yours, whose choice is set on God, if you will; yours, if you will only believe, and comply with the brief terms of the announcement; which the Ninevites having obeyed, instead of the destruction they looked for, obtained a signal deliverance. How, then, may I ascend to heaven, is it said? The Lord is the way; a strait way, but leading from heaven, strait in truth, but leading back to heaven, strait, despised on earth; broad, adored in heaven.

Then, he that is uninstructed in the word, has ignorance as the excuse of his error; but as for him into whose ears instruction has been poured, and who deliberately maintains his incredulity in his soul, the wiser he appears to be, the more harm will his understanding do him; for he has his own sense as his accuser for not having chosen the better part. For man has been otherwise constituted by nature, so as to have fellowship with God. As, then, we do not compel the horse to plough, or

the bull to hunt, but set each animal to that for which it is by nature fitted; so, placing our finger on what is man's peculiar and distinguishing characteristic above other creatures, we invite him—born, as he is, for the contemplation of heaven, and being, as he is, a truly heavenly plant—to the knowledge of God, counseling him to furnish himself with what is his sufficient provision for eternity, namely piety. Practice husbandry, we say, if you are a husbandman; but while you till your fields, know God. Sail the sea, you who are devoted to navigation, yet call the whilst on the heavenly Pilot. Has knowledge taken hold of you while engaged in military service? Listen to the commander, who orders what is right As those, then, who have been overpowered with sleep and drunkenness, do ye awake; and using your eyes a little, consider what mean those stones which you worship, and the expenditure you frivolously lavish on matter. Your means and substance you squander on ignorance, even as you throw away your lives to death, having found no other end of your vain hope than this. Not only unable to pity yourselves, you are incapable even of yielding to the persuasions of those who commiserate you; enslaved as you are to evil custom, and, clinging to it voluntarily till your last breath, you are hurried to destruction: "because light is come into the world, and men have loved the darkness rather than the light," while they could sweep away those hindrances to salvation, pride, and wealth, and fear, repeating this poetic utterance:

> "Whither do I bear these abundant riches? and whither
> Do I myself wander?"

If you wish, then, to cast aside these vain phantasies, and bid adieu to evil custom, say to vain opinion:

> "Lying dreams, farewell; you were then nothing."

For what, think you, O men, is the Hermes of Typho, and that of Andocides, and that of Amyetus? Is it not evident to all that they are stones, as is the veritable Hermes himself? As the Halo is not a god, and as the Iris is not a god, but are states of the atmosphere and of the clouds; and as, likewise, a day is not a god, nor a year, nor time, which is made up of these, so neither is sun nor moon, by which each of those mentioned above is determined. Who, then, in his right senses, can imagine Correction, and Punishment, and Justice, and Retribution to be gods? For neither the Furies, nor the Fates, nor Destiny are gods, since neither Government, nor Glory, nor Wealth are gods, which last (as Plutus) painters represent as blind. But if you deify Modesty, and Love, and Venus, let these be followed by Infamy, and Passion, and Beauty, and Intercourse. Therefore Sleep and Death cannot reasonably any more be regarded as twin deities, being merely changes which take place naturally in living creatures; no more will you with propriety call Fortune, or Destiny, or the Fates goddesses. And if Strife and Battle be not gods, no more are Ares and Enyo. Still further, if the lightnings, and thunderbolts, and rains are not gods, how can fire and water be gods? How can shooting stars and comets, which are produced by atmospheric changes? He who calls Fortune a god, let him also so call Action. If, then, none of these, nor of the images formed by human hands, and destitute of feeling, is held to be a god, while a providence exercised about us is evidently the result of a divine power, it remains only to acknowledge this, that he alone who is truly God, only truly is and subsists. But those who are insensible to this are like men who have drunk mandrake or some other drug. May God grant that you may at length awake from this slumber, and know God; and that neither Gold, nor Stone, nor Tree, nor Action, nor Suffering, nor Disease, nor Fear, may appear in your eyes

as a god! For there are, in sooth, "on the fruitful earth thrice ten thousand" demons, not immortal, nor indeed mortal; for they are not endowed with sensation, so as to render them capable of death, but are only things of wood and stone, that hold despotic sway over men, insulting and violating life through the force of custom. "The earth is the Lord's," it is said, "and the fulness thereof." Then why darest thou, while luxuriating in the bounties of the Lord, to ignore the Sovereign Ruler? "Leave my earth," the Lord will say to thee. "Touch not the water which I bestow. Partake not of the fruits of the earth produced by my husbandry." Give to God recompense for your sustenance; acknowledge thy Master. Thou art God's creature. What belongs to him, how can it with justice be alienated? For that which is alienated, being deprived of the properties that belonged to it, is also deprived of truth. For, after the fashion of Niobe, or, to express myself more mystically, like the Hebrew woman called by the ancients Lot's wife, are ye not turned into a state of insensibility? This woman, we have heard, was turned into stone for her love of Sodom. And those who are godless, addicted to impiety, hard-hearted and foolish, are Sodomites. Believe that these utterances are addressed to you from God. For think not that stones, and stocks, and birds, and serpents are sacred things, and men are not; but, on the contrary, regard men as truly sacred, and take beasts and stones for what they are. For there are miserable wretches of human kind, who consider that God utters his voice by the raven and the jackdaw, but says nothing by man; and honor the raven as a messenger of God. But the man of God, who croaks not, nor chatters, but speaks rationally and instructs lovingly, alas, they persecute; and while he is inviting them to cultivate righteousness, they try inhumanly to slay him, neither welcoming the grace which comes from above, nor fearing the penalty. For they believe not God, nor understand his power, whose love to man is ineffable; and his hatred to evil is inconceivable. His anger augments punishment against sin; his love bestows blessings on repentance. It is the height of wretchedness to be deprived of the help which comes from God. Hence this blindness of eyes and dullness of hearing are more grievous than other inflictions of the evil one; for the one deprives them of heavenly vision, the other robs them of divine instruction. But ye, thus maimed as respects the truth, blind in mind, deaf in understanding, are not grieved, are not pained, have had no desire to see heaven and the Maker of heaven, nor, by fixing your choice on salvation, have sought to hear the Creator of the universe, and to learn of him; for no hindrance stands in the way of him who is bent on the knowledge of God. Neither childlessness, nor poverty, nor obscurity, nor want, can hinder him who eagerly strives after the knowledge of God; nor does any one who has conquered by brass or iron the true wisdom for himself choose to exchange it, for it is vastly preferred to everything else. Christ is able to save in every place. For he that is fired with ardor and admiration for righteousness, being the lover of one who needs nothing, needs himself but little, having treasured up his bliss in nothing but himself and God, where is neither moth, robber, nor pirate, but the eternal Giver of Good. With justice, then, have you been compared to those serpents who shut their eyes against the charmers. For "their mind," says the Scripture, "is like the serpent, like the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ear, and will not hear the voice of the charmers." But allow yourselves to feel the influence of the charming strains of sanctity, and receive that mild word of ours, and reject the deadly poison, that it may be granted to you to divest yourselves as much as possible of destruction, as they have been divested of old age. Hear me, and do not stop your ears; do not block up the avenues of hearing, but lay to heart what is said. Excellent is the medicine of immortality! Stop at length your groveling reptile motions. "For the enemies of the Lord," says Scripture, "shall lick the dust." Raise your eyes from earth to the skies, look up to heaven, admire the sight, cease watching with outstretched head the heel of the righteous, and hindering the way of

truth. Be wise and harmless. Perchance the Lord will endow you with the wing of simplicity (for he has resolved to give wings to those that are earth-born), that you may leave your holes and dwell in heaven. Only let us with our whole heart repent, that we may be able with our whole heart to contain God. "Trust in him, all ye assembled people; pour out all your hearts before him." He says to those that have newly abandoned wickedness, "He pities them and fills them with righteousness." Believe him who is man and God; believe, O man. Believe, ye slaves, him who died; believe, all ye of human kind, him who alone is God of all men. Believe, and receive salvation as your reward. Seek God, and your soul shall live. He who seeks God is busying himself about his own salvation. Hast thou found God?—then thou hast life. Let us then seek, in order that we may live. The reward of seeking is life with God. "Let all who seek thee be glad and rejoice in thee; and let them say continually, "God is magnified." A noble hymn of God is an immortal man, established in righteousness, in whom the oracles of truth are engraved. For where but in a soul that is wise can you write truth? Where love? Where reverence? Where meekness? Those who have had these divine characters impressed on them ought, I think, to regard wisdom as a fair port whence to embark, to whatever lot in life they turn; and likewise to deem it the calm haven of salvation: wisdom, by which those who have betaken themselves to the Father, have proved good fathers to their children; and good parents to their sons, those who have known the Son; and good husbands to their wives, those who remember the Bridegroom; and good masters to their servants, those who have been redeemed from utter slavery. Oh, happier far the beasts than men involved in error! who live in ignorance as you, but do not counterfeit the truth. There are no tribes of flatterers among them. Fishes have no superstition: the birds worship not a single image; only they look with admiration on heaven, since, deprived as they are of reason, they are unable to know God. So are you not ashamed for living through so many periods of life in impiety, making yourselves more irrational than the irrational creatures? You were boys, then striplings, then youths, then men, but never as yet were you good. If you have respect for old age, be wise, now that you have reached life's sunset; and albeit at the close of life, acquire the knowledge of God, that the end of life may to you prove the beginning of salvation. You have become old in superstition; as young, enter on the practice of piety. God regards you as innocent children. Let, then, the Athenian follow the laws of Solon, and the Argive those of Phoroneus, and the Spartan those of Lycurgus; but if thou enroll thyself as one of God's people, heaven is thy country, God thy lawgiver. And what are the laws? "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt love the Lord thy God." And the complements of these are those laws of reason and words of sanctity which are inscribed on men's hearts: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; to him who strikes thee on the cheek, present also the other;" "thou shalt not lust, for by lust alone thou hast committed adultery." How much better, therefore, is it for men from the beginning not to wish to desire things forbidden, than to obtain their desires! But ye are not able to endure the austerity of salvation; but as we delight in sweet things, and prize them higher for the agreeableness of the pleasure they yield, while, on the other hand, those bitter things which are distasteful to the palate are curative and healing, and the harshness of medicines strengthens people of weak stomach, thus custom pleases and tickles; but custom pushes into the abyss, while truth conducts to heaven. Harsh it is at first, but a good nurse of youth; and it is at once the decorous place where the household maids and matrons dwell together, and the sage council chamber. Nor is it difficult to approach, or impossible to attain, but is very near us in our very homes; as Moses, endowed with all wisdom, says, while referring to it, it has its abode in three departments of our constitution—in the hands, the mouth, and the heart: a meet emblem this of truth, which

is embraced by these three things in all—will, action, speech. And be not afraid lest the multitude of pleasing objects which rise before you withdraw you from wisdom. You yourself will spontaneously surmount the frivolousness of custom, as boys when they have become men throw aside their toys. For with a celerity unsurpassable, and a benevolence to which we have ready access, the divine power, casting its radiance on the earth, hath filled the universe with the seed of salvation. For it was not without divine care that so great a work was accomplished in so brief a space by the Lord, who, though despised as to appearance, was in reality adored, the expiator of sin, the Savior, the Clement, the Divine Word, he that is truly most manifest Deity, he that is made equal to the Lord of the universe; because he was his Son, and the Word was in God, not disbelieved in by all when he was first preached, nor altogether unknown when, assuming the character of man, and fashioning himself in flesh, he enacted the drama of human salvation: for he was a true champion and a fellow-champion with the creature. And being communicated most speedily to men, having dawned from his Father's counsel quicker than the sun, with the most perfect ease he made God shine on us. Whence he was and what he was, he showed by what he taught and exhibited, manifesting himself as the Herald of the Covenant, the Reconciler, our Savior, the Word, the Fount of life, the Giver of peace, diffused over the whole face of the earth; by whom, so to speak, the universe has already become an ocean of blessings.—Clement of Alexandria, Vol. 1, pages 80-99. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 1867 A. D.

[Alike unknown are the time and place of the birth of the great scholar and philosopher of the early church, Clement of Alexandria; but, from the times of his writing, he must have been born in the decade between 150 and 160 A. D., and he was Athenian in training, if not by birth. It is probable that his parents were wealthy pagans, giving him every advantage of culture that the times afforded. An earnest soul, he wandered far and wide, searching for truth. At last he became a pupil of Pantaenus in the Christian school of Alexandria. In 189 he succeeded to the place of the master, and taught till 202 or 203, when he fled from Alexandria in the persecution by Septimius Severus, and never returned. We hear of him in Asia Minor, and then he disappears from view.]

DEAD TO SIN.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

Know ye not my brethren, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.—Romans vi: 3, 4.

What does being baptized into his death mean? That it is with a view to our dying as he did. For baptism is the cross. What the cross, then, and burial, is to Christ, that baptism hath been to us, even if not in the same respects. For he died himself and was buried in the flesh, but we have done both to sin. Wherefore he does not say, planted together in his death, but in the likeness of his death. For both the one and the other is a death, but not of the same subject; since the one is of the flesh, that of Christ; the other of sin, which is our own. As then that is real, so is this. But if it be real, then what is of our part again must be contributed. And so Paul proceeds:

That as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Here he hints, along with the duty of a careful walk, at the subject of the resurrection. In what way? Do you believe, he means, that Christ died, and that he was raised again? Believe, then, the same of thyself. For this is like to the other, since both cross and burial is thine. For if thou hast shared in death and burial, much more wilt thou in resurrection and life. For now the greater is done away with, the sin, I mean, it is not right to doubt any longer about the lesser, the doing away of death.

But this he leaves to the conscience of his hearers to reason out, but himself, after the resurrection to come had been set before us, demands of us another, even a new conversation, which is brought about in the present life by a change of habits. When, then, the fornicator becomes chaste, the covetous man merciful, the harsh subdued, even here a resurrection has taken place, the prelude to the other. And how is it a resurrection? Why, because sin is mortified, and righteousness hath risen again, and the old life hath been made to vanish, and this new and angelic one is being lived in. But when you hear of a new life, look for a great alteration, a wide change. But tears come into my eyes, and I groan deeply to think how great religiousness Paul requires of us, and what listlessness we have yielded ourselves up to, going back after our baptism to the oldness we before had, and returning to Egypt, and remembering the onions after the manna. For ten or twenty days at the very time of baptism we undergo a change, but then take up our former doings again. But it is not for a set number of days, but for our whole life, that Paul requires of us such a conversation. But we go back to our former vomit, thus after the youth of grace building up the old age of sins. For either the love of money, or the slavery to desires not convenient, or any other sin whatsoever, useth to make the worker thereof old Now that which is made old, and is become aged, is nigh unto disappearing. For

there is no body, there surely is none, to be seen as palsied by length of time, as a soul is decayed and tottering with many sins. Such an one gets carried on to the last degree of doting, yielding indistinct sounds, like men that are very old and crazed, and being surcharged with rheum, and great distortion of mind, and forgetfulness, and with scales upon its eyes, becomes at once disgustful to men, and an easy prey to the devil. Such, then, are the souls of sinners; not so those of the righteous, for they are youthful and well-favored, and are in the very prime of life throughout, ever ready for any fight or struggle. But those of sinners, if they receive even a small stock, straightway fall and are undone. And it was this the prophet made appear when he said that like as the chaff which the wind scattered from the face of the earth, thus are they that live in sin whirled to and fro, and exposed to every sort of harm. For they neither see like a healthy person, nor hear with simplicity, they speak not articulately, but are oppressed with great shortness of breath. They have their mouth overflowing with spittle. And would it were but spittle, and nothing offensive! But now they send forth words more fetid than any mire, and what is worst, they have not power even to spit the saliva of words away from them, but taking it in their hand with much lewdness, they smear it on again, so as to be coagulating, and hard to perspire through. Perhaps ye are sickened with this description. Ought ye not, then, to be more so at the reality? For if these things when happening in the body are disgustful, much more when in the soul. Such was that son who wasted out all his share, and was reduced to the greatest wretchedness, and was in a feebler state than any imbecile or disordered person. But when he was willing, he became suddenly young by his decision alone and his change. For as soon as he had said, I will return to my Father, this one word conveyed to him all blessings; or rather not the bare word, but the deed which he added to the word. For he did not say, I will go up, and then stay there; but said, I will go up, and went up, and returned the whole of that way. Thus let us also do; and even if we have gotten carried beyond the boundary, let us go up to our Father's house, and not stay lingering over the length of the journey. For if we be willing, the way back again is easy and very speedy. Only let us leave the strange and foreign land; for this is what sin is, drawing us far away from our Father's house; let us leave her, then, that we may speedily return to the house of our Father. For our Father hath a natural yearning towards us, and will honor us if we be changed, no less than those that are unattainted, if we change, but even more, just as the father showed that son the greater honor. For he had greater pleasure himself at receiving back his son. And how am I to go back again? one may say. Do but put a beginning upon the business, and the whole is done. Stay from vice, and go no farther into it, and thou hast laid hold of the whole already. For as in the case of the sick, being no worse may be a beginning of getting better, so is the case with vice also. Go no further, and then your deeds of wickedness will have an end. And if you do so for two days, you will keep off on the third day more easily; and after the three days, you will add ten, then twenty, then an hundred, then your whole life. For the further thou goest on, the easier wilt thou see the way to be, and thou wilt stand close to the summit, and wilt at once enjoy many goods. For so it was, when the prodigal came back, there were flutes, and harps, and dancings, and feasts, and assemblings; and he who might have called his son to account for his ill-timed extravagance, and flight to such a distance, did nothing of the sort, but looked upon him as unattainted, and could not find it in him even to use the language of reproach, or rather, even to mention barely to him the former things, but threw himself upon him, and kissed him, and killed the calf, and put a robe upon him, and placed on him abundant honors. Let us, then, as we have such examples before us, be of good cheer and keep from despair. For he is not so well pleased with being called Master, as Father, nor with having a slave as with having a son. And this what

he liketh rather than that. This, then, is why he did all that he has done; and spared not even his only begotten Son, that we might be adopted as sons, that we might love him, not as a master only, but as a father. And if he obtain this of us, he taketh delight therein as one that has glory given him, and proclaimeth it to all, though he needeth nothing of ours. This is what, in Abraham's case for instance, he everywhere does, using the words, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and yet it was they of his household who should have found an honor in this. But now it is the Lord evidently who does this: for this is why he says to Peter, Loveth thou me more than these? to show that he seeketh nothing so much as this from us. For this, too, he bade Abraham offer his son to him, that he might make it known to all that he was greatly beloved by the patriarch. Now this exceeding desire to be loved comes from loving exceedingly. For this cause, too, he said to the apostles, He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. For this cause he bids us esteem that even which is in the most close connection with us, our soul, as second to the love of him, since he wisheth to be beloved by us with exceeding entireness. For we, too, if we have no strong feeling about a person, have no strong desire for his friendship either, though he be great and noble; whereas when we love anyone warmly and really, though the person loved be of low rank and humble, yet we esteem love from him as a very great honor. And for this reason he himself also called it glory not to be loved by us only, but even to suffer those shameful things in our behalf. However, those things were a glory owing to love only. But whatever we suffer for him, it is not for love alone; but even for the sake of the greatness and dignity of him we love, that it would with good reason both be called glory, and be so indeed. Let us, then, incur dangers for him as if running for the greatest crowns, and let us esteem neither poverty, nor disease, nor affront, nor calumny, nor death itself, to be heavy and burdensome, when it is for him that we suffer these things. For if we be right-minded, we are the greatest possible gainers by these things, as neither from the contrary to these shall we, if not right-minded, gain any advantage. But consider; does anyone affront thee and war against thee? Doth he not thereby set thee upon thy guard, and give thee an opportunity of growing like unto God? For if thou lovest him that plots against thee, thou wilt be like him that maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good. Does another take thy money away? If thou bearest it nobly, thou shalt receive the same reward as they who have spent all they have upon the poor. For it says, Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Has anyone reviled thee and abused thee, whether truly or falsely, he weaves for thee a very great crown if thou bearest meekly his contumely; since he, too, who calumniates, provides for us an abundant reward. For rejoice, it says, and be exceeding glad, when men say all manner of evil against you falsely, because great is your reward in heaven. And he, too, that speaketh truth against us is of the greatest service, if we do but bear meekly what is said. For the Pharisee spake evil of the Publican, and with truth, till instead of a Publican he made him a righteous man. And what need to go into particular instances? For anyone that will go to the conflicts of Job may learn all these points accurately. And this is why Paul said, If God be for us, who can be against us? As then by being earnest we gain even from things that vex us, so by being listless, we do not even improve from things that favor us. For what did Judas profit, tell me, by being with Christ? Or what profit was the law to the Jews? Or Paradise to Adam? Or what did Moses profit those in the wilderness? And so we should leave all, and look to one point only, how we may husband aright our own resources. And if we do this, not even the devil himself will ever get the better of us, but will make our profiting the greater, by putting us upon being watchful. Now in this way it is that St. Paul rouses the Ephesians, by describing his fierceness. Yet we sleep and snore, though

we have to do with so crafty an enemy. And if we were aware of a serpent nestling by our bed, we should make much ado to kill him. But when the devil nestleth in our souls, we fancy that we take no harm, but lie at our ease; and the reason is, that we see him not with the eyes of our body. And yet this is why we should rouse us the more and be sober. For against an enemy whom one can perceive one may easily be on guard; but one that cannot be seen, if we be not continually in arms, we shall not easily escape. And the more so, because he hath no notion of open combat (for he would surely be soon defeated), but often under the appearance of friendship he insinuates the venom of his cruel malice. In this way it was that he suborned Job's wife, by putting on the mask of natural affectionateness, to give that wretchless advice. And so when conversing with Adam, he puts on the air of one concerned and watching over his interests, and saith, that your eyes shall be opened in the day that ye eat of the tree. Thus Jephtha, too, he persuaded, under the pretext of religion, to slay his daughter, and to offer the sacrifice the law forbade. Do you see what his wiles are, what his varying warfare? Be then on thy guard, and arm thyself at all points with the weapons of the Spirit, get exactly acquainted with his plans, that thou mayest both keep from being caught, and easily catch him. For it was thus that Paul got the better of him, by getting exactly acquainted with these. And so he says, For we are not ignorant of his devices. Let us then also be earnest in learning and avoiding his stratagems, that after obtaining a victory over him, we may, whether in this present life or in that which is to come, be proclaimed conquerors, and obtain those unalloyed blessings.—S. Chrysostom's Homilies on Romans.

[In Antioch of Syria, 347 A. D., a son was born to the Roman general Secundus and his wife Arethusa, whom they called John, but who is known to Christendom by his title of Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed. While a youth he became a Christian, and later a hermit in the mountains near Antioch. After six years he was recalled to Antioch by the bishop Meletius, where his burning eloquence produced a marvelous effect. In 398 the emperor Arcadius summoned him to become bishop of Constantinople. But his rigid rule and his plain speaking speedily made him many enemies among the worldly clergy and the pleasure-loving court of the capital. His foes gained as their champion Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria. This ambitious and unscrupulous ecclesiastic hated Chrysostom with a bitter hatred because of the latter's superiority in both goodness and ability. The empress Eudoxia was offended by Chrysostom's preaching, and joined with his foes to crush him, and the emperor was persuaded to banish him into remote and desert parts of Asia Minor. After suffering great hardships he died at Komona, Pontus, on September 14, 407, a victim of wicked and worldly ecclesiastics.]

WATCHFULNESS ENFORCED.

JOHN WICLIF.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, etc.—Luke xii: 35.

This gospel teaches all men how they should live to Christ, but especially prelates that should be light to the people. First, Christ biddeth his disciples that their loins be girt, and lanterns burning in their hands, as they should meet their Lord when he cometh again from bridals. These loins that Christ speaketh of are the fleshly nature joined with the soul. This flesh serves to the soul, suffering as it should suffer, and doing as it should do, when it is taught well of the soul. And thus saith Paul that Christ was in Abraham's loins.

These loins are girt when man with discretion draws from his flesh the nourishment thereof, or chastises it on other manner before it fall into sin. Burning lanterns are needful works, that men have in their power, by which they should work. And, because these works came both of body and of soul, therefore they are called of Christ two lanterns; and they are in our hands when we work with them. For it is not enough to keep us from sin unless we work good works by these two lanterns.

For these bridals we shall know that they are taken in many manners; first, for the weddings wherein Christ is joined with the soul; and after, for the dwelling that Christ dwelleth in with the soul; and thirdly, for the spiritual food that souls are fed with Christ in bliss. And so there are three weddings that Christ is wedded here; first, when he took mankind and made it one person with him; after, when he taketh his church and maketh it one spouse with him; the third is when Christ taketh any soul in particular with him. And so Christ is said to return again from bridals on two manners. First, when a man is dead, whom Christ hath ordained to come to bliss, Christ turneth again to his soul. But then he must have dwelt there before, or else this soul had not come to this state. And so we should be like men that abide the coming of Christ in time of death or day of doom. And this abiding should all manner of men mark; for this coming is uncertain, and this time is perilous. And to these comings of Christ should each man make him ready, since Christ shall come and knock at doors and enter to them that are waking, and ready to receive Christ, without sleeping in sin. And Christ knocketh at our doors when he teacheth us signs of death, or signs of the day of doom; but the last knocking is sudden. If man be ready before to dwell with Christ without end, then he opens to Christ, since this opening is readiness.

And thus saith Christ full truly, that those servants are blessed who when the Lord cometh he findeth thus waking. Truly I say to you that this Lord shall gird himself, and make them sit to meat, and pass and minister to them.

The sitting to meat of saints, is confirming them in bliss. The passing of this Lord by them, is his showing to one and to another. This service is light to Christ,

for it is Christ's showing of his Godhead and his manhood, in which saints shall be fed.

And if this Lord come in the second vigil, and also in the third, and find such readiness in these servants, full blessed are these servants; since they quickly are blessed of God. The three vigils that Christ telleth of here are three wakings from sin, and always of the last sin, which is the worst evil that may be. And so we pray God in the paternoster to deliver us from this evil. And as the length of these three vigils is uncertain to man, therefore he should ever wake, and then he waketh these three vigils.

The ignorance of these times, and the knowing that we should ever wake, profits unto God's children; as do all things, as Paul saith. Since we know not the quantity of these three times, we should evermore be in dread, and ever wake out of sin. And this lore Christ teacheth in a parable to his children. This thing, he saith, know well, that if the master knew what time the thief would come and steal his goods, he would wake full busily, and not suffer this thief thus to break his house and spoil him. It is touched before, how this thief is the fiend, that doth all his diligence to tempt man when he shall die. And when the fiend hopeth to overcome; and when the night of sin blinds men to know themselves, then is time for the fiend to fight fastest. This thief ever worketh by deceits, and fighteth blithest in hour of darkness; and in time of man's death he strives most to overcome. For this victory shall ever last, on whatever side it fall.

This house is man's body, that his soul is kept in; and the undermining of this house may be done in two manners. First when the fiend supposes that a man shall die there, he gathers together man's spirits, and tempts him to many sins, as to wrath, to lechery, and especially to despair. But let us seek blessing with the Trinity, and think on God in this case; and against the first sin, think we meekly on God's power, how God is stronger than the fiend, and without him may we not do. And such thought of the Father of heaven should overcome the fiend in hour of death. Against the second sin of the fiend, we should think on God and the Son; how kindly he is spouse to us, and bought us with his precious blood; and how he may not part from us, if our unkindness be not in the cause. We should think how fair and good a spouse is Christ, and how foul is the fiend: and by thoughts Christ would give virtue to men to overcome the fiend, when he tempteth man in the hour of death to think on evil. Against despair we should think of the goodness of the Holy Ghost; how our good God may not leave us, if our folly be not in the cause. And if we have sinned ever so much, and ever so long have lain in sin, ask we God for mercy in our thoughts, and have we sorrow for this sin; and God is ready to forgive it, however priests fail. For the fiend may be away from man's soul, but not God; and the mercy of God is more than envy of the fiend; and the goodness of God is more than the hate of the fiend. What should move men to despair, since they may so easily be saved? And nothing is more in man's power, than the thought of his soul.

But we must have a love-dread of our God in this hour, since we know that old sin may be so hard then in our soul, that we shall not be then in power to again stand the tempting of the fiend. For as a staff may grow so great, and be so stiff in its strength, that men shall not writhe it, though they would be ever so fain, so sin may grow in man, and be so strong in time of death, that righteousness of God then will hinder man to obey thus to God, this dread of God we should have, and always in the hour of our death. And this is a good defence against the fiend and despair, but this must be a love-dread, and hope in love of God, how that God hath more love than the fiend hath envy: for God's love is without end, but this envy is foul and feeble. And this envy may not overcome the virtue of God's love; for the love that God loveth righteousness, maketh overcoming in this hour.

Since our good God giveth us strength to love him, and to hope in him; and the

fiend may not hinder us to think on this gift of God; what man should despair of God in the hour that God departeth the soul? God suffereth the fiend to hasten a man to his death, but God will never suffer that a man may not freely think on him. And if his power be so barred, the sin of man is the cause, and reasons of the fiend are blinded in this matter. The fiend puts to us the great sins that we have done in work and thought. And for the greatness of these sins, God's righteousness hath strengthened us. We will answer here, We grant meekly that we have sinned in thought, in word, and in deed; but we know that God's grace is much more than all our sin. And the fool knows not how God hath made us now. For we feel the grace of God, how we hope in his goodness, and sorrow for our sin; and this the fiend knoweth not. But yet the fiend argueth thus, Some man must be damned, but who should be damned but thou, who thus hath been unkind to God? Here we answer, that he saith the truth, but how can this fiend prove that God will have me damned, since I have hope in my soul which is hidden to the fiend? And well I know, the fiend knoweth not this secret ordinance of God, as he knew not his own condemnation, how God made it to the bliss of saints; but yet the fiend argues that all things which shall come, must needs come by the ordinance of God, and thus the fiend thinks he shall have of me a glorious victory.

But here we answer to this fiend, and grant him that which he taketh, and so he must needs be damned for the folly that he is in. He travaileth busily to have victory over us, but yet we hope that he shall fail, by sparkles of grace that we feel. And well we know as belief, if the fiend overcome us, it shall not be glorious to him, but more to his condemnation. For ever the more harm that he doth, ever the worse shall he be punished, and so men that shall be damned with him shall ever be painful to him. For he shall grieve that he did so much evil. And so the fiends shut up in fast bonds forever shall ever grieve together. What man that knows these fools' tastes should be overcome with this fiend, since our good God is so nigh, and his mercy is so great, and the folly of this proud fiend, in boasting of things that he knoweth not is so offensive before God, and so known to God's children?—British Reformers—Wickliff. Pages 236-240. 14th Century. London: The Religious Tract Society.

[John Wiclif was born in the North Riding of Yorkshire A. D. 1324. His family were gentry, and held to the characteristics of the Saxon Germans. He was one of the leading men who prepared for the Reformation, one of its fore-runners. In May, 1366, he was given a seat and voice in Parliament because of his opposition to payment of papal tax, the defeat of which ended any claim of papal lordship over England. He was thus first a political reformer before becoming a religious reformer. He took up his pastoral work personally and his sermons were repeated by traveling preachers who went out from his school at Lutterworth. His translation of the New Testament from the Vulgate marked the perfection of mediæval English. He died from paralysis in 1384, and in 1415 he was adjudged a heretic, but it was not until 1427 that his bones were dug up and burned. To Wiclif and Tyndale we are indebted for the simple beauty of the English Bible.]

CHRISTIANS TURNED PAGAN.

SAVONAROLA.

"Ecce magi ab oriente."—Matt. ii: 1.

"Behold the Lord Jesus. He is not to-day an infant in the manger, but great in majesty in heaven. He has taught; he has done miracles; he has been crucified, and has arisen from the dead. He sits at the right hand of the Father; he has sent his Holy Spirit into the world; he has sent the Apostles; he has subjugated the nations, and his Vicar has accepted the empire of Rome; and behold, now are all things prepared; and he has sent his servants forth, saying, Behold I have prepared my banquet, my bullock, and the fatted animals are killed, and all things are prepared, come to the wedding feast. Behold, the doors of heaven are opened, and the paths have been trod of old; and the apostles have walked in them, and the confessors, and the holy virgins, and all the fathers. Come then to the eternal espousals.

"But you, Christian born, and nurtured among Catholics, who have been baptized and nourished with the gospel, fortified with many sacraments, and strengthened in the faith with many sermons; now, when every idolatry is destroyed, when the light is now shed over the word, and the dark clouds scattered, that you, in the midst (of the influences) of the Holy Scriptures, surrounded by brightness of the eternal light, how is it I say, that you do not come to adore Jesus, with a great faith, full of fervour?

"You have not to come from the east to adore him, yet it is a trouble to you to come to him from a little distance. You cannot leave your riches, you cannot endure the toil (of seeking him), you are fearful of danger. But you have not to go to Jerusalem to seek him. Now have we the kingdom of heaven everywhere; but you have grown indolent, and all fatigue is disagreeable to you. You are ashamed to follow the footsteps of Christ, who now reigns in heaven.

"You do not esteem it a great matter to serve him—quite the contrary; and your works show that you are not a Christian. You have already broken your baptismal vows; you have trodden the blood of Christ under foot; you are a rebel to his law; and your promises (of allegiance to it) serve for nothing.

"How have you renounced the devil and his pomps, you, who every day do his work! You do not attend to the laws of Christ, but to the literature of the Gentiles. Behold the Magi have abandoned paganism and come to Christ, and you, having abandoned Christ, run to paganism. You have left the manna and the bread of angels, and you have sought to satiate your appetite with the food that is fit for swine. Every day avarice augments, and the vortex of usury is enlarged. Luxury has contaminated everything; pride ascends even to the clouds; blasphemies pierce the ears of heaven, and scoffing takes place in the very face of God. You (who act thus) are of the devil, who is your father, and you seek to do the will of your father. Behold those who are worse than the Jews, and yet to us belong the Sacred Scriptures which speak against them—Many are the blind who say our times are more felicitous than the past ages,

but I think if the Holy Scriptures are true, our lives are not only like those of our fathers of former times, but they are at variance with them—Cast your eyes on Rome which is the chief city of the world, and lower your regards to all her members, and lo! from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, no sanity is there.

"We are in the midst of Christians, we converse with Christians, but they are not Christians, who are so only in name; far better would it be in the midst of pagans. . . For now men have become lovers of themselves; covetous, haughty, proud, profane, disobedient to father and mother, ungrateful, given to ribaldry, without love, without peace, censorious, incontinent, spiteful, without benignity, treacherous persons, deceivers, puffed up lovers of voluptuousness more than of God, who have the form of righteousness, but who deny the value of it."—From Madden's Life and Martyrdom of Savonarola.

A REPLY TO CRITICS.

SAVONAROLA.

Amos iv: 1.

On one occasion he gave a strange interpretation to the following text: "Audite verbum hoc, vaccae pingues, quae estis in Monte Samariae." "Well, then: who be those which say that I should preach the Holy Scripture? . . . I preach nothing else. If thou knewest what is the Holy Scripture thou wouldst not speak thus. Rather thou shouldst have said: preach Tullius or Virgil, and then I should not have tested thee; but the Holy Scripture will test thee at all points. Well! I will preach the Scripture, I will obey thee. Tell me, how wouldst thou interpret these words?—O vaccae pingues . . . For me these fat kine signify the harlots of Italy and Rome . . . Are there none in Italy and Rome? One thousand, ten thousand, fourteen thousand are few for Rome; for there both men and women are made harlots." And pursuing this strain, he describes the vices of Rome in terms scarcely to be repeated at the present day. He then turns to the people, accusing them of a false and hypocritical religion, only taking satisfaction in material things. "Ye are corrupt in all things, in your speech and your silence, in that which ye do and that which ye leave undone, in your belief and your unbelief. Ye speak against prophecy; and behold there cometh one to tell ye a strange dream, and ye have faith in it. He telleth ye: fast on a certain Saturday, at a certain hour, and ye fast, and ye believe ye are saved. I tell ye that the Lord willeth not that ye fast on such a day or at such an hour, but willeth that ye avoid sin throughout all the days of your life. Instead, ye are good for one hour of the day, in order to be bad all your life. Observe the ways of these men during the last three days of Holy Week. See how they go about seeking indulgences and pardons! Come here, go there, kiss St. Peter, St. Paul, this Saint and that! Come, come, ring bells, dress altars, deck the churches, come all of ye, for three days before Easter, and then no more. God mocketh your doings, heedeth not your ceremonies, . . . for, Easter past, ye will be worse than before. All is vanity, all hypocrisy in our times; true religion is dead." And elsewhere: "How is it

that if I were to say: give me ten ducats for one in need, thou wouldst not give them, but if I tell thee: spend a hundred for a chapel here in St. Mark, wouldst thou do it? Yes! in order to have thy coat of arms placed there, for thine own glory but not for the glory of God. . . . Look through all convent buildings, and thou wilt find them full of their founders' armorial bearings. I raise my head to look above a door, thinking to see a crucifix, and behold there is a shield; I raise my head again a little farther on, and behold there is another shield—armorial bearings everywhere. I don a vestment, thinking that a crucifix is painted on it; but arms have been painted even there, the better to be seen by the people. These, then, are your idols, to which ye make sacrifice?" Then, after describing and condemning the corruption of the times, and especially of the clergy, he always repeats his predictions of the coming chastisement of Rome and of Italy.

"Prepare thee, I say, for heavy shall be thy chastisement, O Rome! Thou shalt be girdled with steel, put to the sword, to fire and flames . . . Wretched Italy! how I see thee struck down; wretched people! how I see ye all oppressed! . . . Italy, thou art stricken with a grave disease. . . . Thou, Rome, art stricken with a mortal malady, usque ad mortem. Thou hast lost thy health, and hast forsaken the Lord, thou art sick with sins and tribulations. . . . If thou wouldst be healed, forsake feasting; forsake thy pride, thy ambition, thy lusts, and thy greed: these be the food that have caused thy sickness, these that bring thee to death. . . . Italy laughed at this, Italy maketh mock at it, refuseth medicine, sayeth that the physician raveth. . . . O ye unbelieving ones, since ye will neither harken nor be converted, thus saith the Lord: Inasmuch as Italy is all full of sanguinary deeds, . . . full of iniquities, harlots, and miserable panders, I will overwhelm her with the scum of the earth; will abase her princes, and trample the pride of Rome. These invaders shall capture her sanctuaries, and defile her churches; and inasmuch as these have been made dens of vice, I will make them stables for horses and swine, the which will be less displeasing to God than seeing them made haunts of prostitutes. When trouble and tribulation draw nigh, men will have no peace; they will seek to be converted, without being able; they will be confused and bewildered. . . . Then, O Italy! trouble after trouble shall befall thee; troubles of war after famine, troubles of pestilence after war; trouble from this side and from that. There will be rumors upon rumors, now rumors of barbarians on this side; then rumors of barbarians on that. Rumors from the east, from the west; from all sides rumor after rumor. Then men will yearn for the visions of the prophets, and will have them not, for the Lord saith, 'Now do I prophesy in my turn.' Men will lean on astrology, and it will profit them nothing. The law of the priesthood shall perish, and priests be stripped of their rank; princes shall wear haircloth; the people be crushed by tribulation. All men will lose courage, and as they have judged, so shall they be judged."

In another sermon we find the following description of the plague that was to come upon Italy: "Believe ye this Friar, that there will not be enough men left to bury the dead; nor means to dig the graves. So many will lie dead in the houses, that men will go through the streets crying, 'Send forth your dead!' and the dead will be heaped in carts and on horses; they will be piled up and burnt. Men will pass through the streets crying aloud, 'Are there any dead?' Then some persons will come forth and say, 'Here is my son, here is my brother, here is my husband!' . . . Again they will go through the streets crying, 'Be there no more dead here?' And the people will be so thinned that few shall remain."—From the Life and Times of Savonarola.—Villari.

THE STYLE OF SAVONAROLA'S DISCOURSE.

In Romola George Eliot gives what she calls a free representation, which will give a better idea of Savonarola's style than a mere translation.

"All ye in Florence are my witnesses, for I spoke not in a corner. Ye are my witnesses, that four years ago, when there were yet no signs of war and tribulation, I preached the coming of the scourge. I lifted up my voice as a trumpet to the prelates and princes and people of Italy and said, The cup of your iniquity is full. Behold, the thunder of the Lord is gathering, and it shall fall and break the cup, and your iniquity, which seems to you as pleasant wine, shall be poured out upon you, and shall be as molten lead. And you, O priests, who say, Ha, ha! there is no Presence in the Sanctuary—the Shechinah is naught—the Mercy-seat is bare: we may sin behind the veil, and who shall punish us? To you I said, the presence of God shall be revealed in his temple as a consuming fire, and your sacred garments shall become a winding sheet of flame, and for sweet music there shall be shrieks and hissing, and for soft couches there shall be thorns, and for the breath of wantons shall come the pestilence. Trust not in your gold and silver, trust not in your high fortresses; for, though the walls were of iron, and the fortresses of adamant, the Most High shall put terror into your hearts and weakness into your councils, so that you shall be confounded and flee like women. He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and put others in their stead. For God will no longer endure the pollution of his sanctuary; he will thoroughly purge his church.

"And forasmuch as it is written that God will do nothing but he revealeth it to his servants the prophets, he has chosen me, his unworthy servant, and made his purpose present to my soul in the living word of Scriptures, and in the deeds of his providence; and by the ministry of angels he has revealed it to me in visions. And his word possesses me so that I am but as the branch of the forest when the wind of heaven penetrates it, and it is not in me to keep silence, even though I may be a derision to the scorner. And for four years I have preached in obedience to the Divine will: in the face of scoffing I have preached three things, which the Lord has delivered to me: that in these times God will regenerate His Church, and that before the regeneration must come the scourge over all Italy, and that these things will come quickly.

"But hypocrites who cloak their hatred of the truth with a show of love have said to me. 'Come now, Frate, leave your prophesyings: it is enough to teach virtue.' To these I answer: 'Yes, you say in your hearts, God lives afar off, and his word is as a parchment written by dead men, and he leads not as in the days of old, rebuking the nations, and punishing the oppressors, and smiting the unholy priests as he smote the sons of Eli. But I cry again in your ears: God is near and not afar off; his judgments change not. He is the God of armies; the strong men who go up to battle are his ministers, even as the storm and fire, and pestilence. He drives them by the breath of his angels, and they come upon the chosen land which has forsaken the

covenant. And thou, O Italy, art the chosen land; has not God placed his sanctuary within thee, and thou has polluted it? Behold, the ministers of his wrath are upon thee—they are at thy very doors!'"

Savonarola's voice had been rising in impassioned force up to this point, when he became suddenly silent, let his hands fall and clasped them quietly before him. His silence, instead of being the signal for small movements amongst his audience, seemed to be as strong a spell to them as his voice. Through the vast area of the cathedral men and women sat with faces upturned, like breathing statues, till the voice was heard again in clear low tones.

"Yet there is a pause—even as in the day when Jerusalem was destroyed there was a pause that the children of God might flee from it. There is a stillness before the storm; lo, there is blackness above, but not a leaf quakes: the winds are stayed, that the voice of God's warning may be heard. Hear it now, O Florence, chosen city in the chosen land! Repent and forsake evil: do justice: love mercy: put away all uncleanness from among you, that the spirit of truth and holiness may fill your souls and breathe through all your streets and habitations, and then the pestilence shall not enter, and the sword shall pass over you and leave you unhurt.

"For the sword is hanging from the sky; it is quivering; it is about to fall! The sword of God upon the earth, swift and sudden! Did I not tell you years ago, that I had beheld the vision and heard the voice? And behold, it is fulfilled! Is there not a king with his army at your gates? Does not the earth shake with the tread of horses and the wheels of swift cannon? Is there not a fierce multitude that can lay bare the land as with a sharp razor? I tell you the French king with his army is the minister of God: God shall guide him as the hand guides a sharp sickle, and the joints of the wicked shall melt before him, and they shall be mown down as stubble: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. And the tyrants who have made to themselves a throne out of the vices of the multitude, and the unbelieving priests who traffic in the souls of men and fill the very sanctuary with fornication, shall be hurled from their soft couches into burning hell, and the pagans and they who sinned under the old covenant shall stand aloof and say: 'Lo, these men have brought the stench of a new wickedness into the everlasting fire.'

"But thou, O Florence, take the offered mercy. See! the cross is held out to you: come and be healed. Which among the nations of Italy has had a token like unto yours? The tyrant is driven out from among you: the men who held a bribe in their left hand and a rod in the right are gone forth, and no blood has been spilled. And now put away every other abomination from among you, and you shall be strong in the strength of the living God. Wash yourselves from the black pitch of your vices, which have made you even as the heathens: put away the envy and hatred that have made your city as a nest of wolves. And there shall no harm happen to you: and the passage of armies shall be to you as a flight of birds, and rebellious Pisa shall be given to you again, and famine and pestilence shall be far from your gates, and you shall be as a beacon among the nations. But, mark! while you suffer the accursed thing to lie in the camp you shall be afflicted and tormented even though a remnant among you may be saved."

These admonitions and promises had been spoken in an incisive tone of authority; but in the next sentence the preacher's voice melted into a strain of entreaty.

"Listen, O people, over whom my heart yearns, as a heart of the mother over the children she has travailed for! God is my witness that but for your sakes I would willingly live as a turtle in the depths of the forest, singing low to my Beloved, who is mine and I am his. For you I toil, for you I languish, for you my nights are spent in watching, and my soul melteth away for very heaviness. O Lord, thou

knowest I am willing—I am ready. Take me, stretch me on thy cross: let the wicked who delight in blood, and rob the poor, and defile the temple of their bodies, and harden themselves against thy mercy—let them wag their heads and shoot out the lip at me: let the thorns press my brow, and let my sweat be anguish—I desire to be made like thee in thy great love. But let me see the fruit of my travail—let this people be saved! Let me see them clothed in purity: let me hear their voices in concord as the voices of angels: let them see no wisdom but in thy eternal law, no beauty but in holiness. Then they shall lead the way before the nations, and the people from the four winds shall follow them, and be gathered into the fold of the blessed. For it is thy will, O God, that the earth shall be converted unto thy law: it is thy will that wickedness shall cease and love shall reign. Come, O blessed promise; and behold, I am willing—lay me on the altar: let my blood flow and the fire consume me, but let my witness be remembered among men, that iniquity shall not prosper forever."

[Jerome Savonarola was born at Ferara in 1452 and was destined for a grand career by his grandfather, but while a youth he ran away from home to Bologna and became a Dominican monk, writing back of the depravity of the world, saying: "There is nothing left for us but to weep and to hope for better things yonder." Fourteen years he lived in the convent studying theology. He was then sent to Florence to teach the young men in the convent of St. Mark. In 1489 he began to give expositions of the book of Revelation in the convent church. He preached repentance and reform and prophesied calamities. He said the scriptures led to Christ and not to the priests. He says when he preached doctrines of human invention he pleased an impatient and fickle people, but when he turned to the Bible he shook men's souls. He preached against Lorenzo, and when advised to change his style, he sent word for Lorenzo to change *his* ways. Charles the Eighth of France drove out the son who succeeded Lorenzo. He received the poor monk as a prophet, and left the Florentines to direct their own affairs, the constitution being modeled by Savonarola. In 1496 he was forbidden by the pope to preach. His failure to meet the challenge of an ordeal by fire turned the people against him temporarily and his convent was attacked and he was taken prisoner and tortured shamefully. He was hung May 23, 1498, between his two companions and his body burned on the gallows, the ashes being cast into the Arno.—Lives of Church Leaders.]

THE GIFT OF GOD.

MARTIN LUTHER.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.—John iii: 16, 17.

This Gospel is one of the most precious passages in the whole New Testament, and fully deserves, if it could be done, to be written with golden letters into our hearts. Every Christian ought to learn this consoling text by heart, and should repeat it once at least each day, so that we would know these words well and could readily apply them for our consolation and the strengthening of our faith. They are words which have power to gladden us when we are sad and to bring us back to life when we are dead, if we but accept them earnestly in true faith. But inasmuch as it is impossible for us to comprehend fully and to express properly the contents of this glorious text, let us pray earnestly unto God to impress these words deeply upon our hearts through his Holy Spirit, so that they may become powerful in us, and may give us much joy and consolation, Amen.

The sum and substance of this glorious, comfortable, and blessed passage is this, that God loved the world so dearly that he gave his only begotten Son to save men from eternal death and to give them everlasting life. Christ our Lord speaks to us, as it were, in these words: Heed what I tell you of a peculiar, unheard-of occurrence; yea, I will point you to a great, precious and valuable treasure, which is totally unlike any earthly gifts, by which you can now be rich and blessed for evermore. All the circumstances connected with the bestowal and reception of this precious gift are so peculiar and overwhelmingly grand that human thoughts cannot compass them, and much less can our words express their great importance.

If we consider first the Giver of this blessing, we find that the text says nothing of emperors, kings, or other dignitaries of the world, but it speaks of God himself, who is incomprehensible and omnipotent, who has created everything through his Word, who has all and preserves all and is over all, compared with whom all creation, heaven and earth, with all they contain, is but as an insignificant grain of sand. He, the Almighty, is the great Giver of all blessings, and his gifts are so glorious that the most valued treasures of men, of emperors and kings, fade away into nothingness when compared with the mercies of God. Let us, therefore, rejoice greatly and sing for gladness in view of these blessings, and let us consider as mere trifles everything else that the world can bestow. What indeed can be greater or more glorious than the Almighty himself!

This God, who is infinite and ineffable, manifests his loving-kindness in a degree beyond all measure. What he gives he gives not as something merited, or because it is his duty to give it, but simply, as our text says, through love. He is a Giver who

begrudges not his gifts, but delights in bestowing them; he gives on account of endless, divine love, as Christ says: "For God so loved the world."

There is no other virtue so glorious as love. What we dearly love we are ready to defend and protect at the risk of our life. Patience, chastity, temperance, etc., are also praiseworthy virtues, but cannot be compared with love; she is queen over them all, and comprehends them all. Surely if one is pious and righteous, he will not defraud or injure his brother, but will assist him in everything; but if we love a person, we are ever ready to devote ourselves entirely to his welfare and to assist him, according as he has need, with our counsel and our possessions. Thus, as Christ declares in our text, does God also do toward us. He gives us blessings beyond measure, not because he is patient or because we are righteous and deserve it, but through love, the greatest of all virtues. In view of this fact our hearts should awake, all our sadness should vanish, for we see before us the inexhaustible love of the divine heart, which we ought to cherish in true faith as the greatest of all gifts, knowing that God is the highest and most glorious Giver of blessings unto us, and that they all proceed from the greatest of all virtues.

The fact that anything is given from true love makes the gift itself greater and more precious. If therefore we are convinced that love prompts the bestowal of any gift, we are well pleased; but when we doubt the existence of this motive in the giver, we care but little for his gift. Thus if God had given us only one eye or one foot and we were convinced that fatherly love prompted him to do this, we would be entirely content and better satisfied than we would otherwise be if we had a hundred eyes and a hundred feet.

But the words are plain: "God so loved the world." Therefore we ought to value highly, on account of his love, all his gifts, especially those which he has ordained to our salvation and the strengthening of our faith, as Holy Baptism, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, etc. These gifts appear not brilliant before the world, yet unto us they are heaven itself, and make us glad and cheerful because they flow from the love of our Father toward us and are instituted for our benefit. Therefore Christ in this connection not only teaches us that God will give us something, but also in what manner he will do this, namely, through divine, fatherly love.

Thus we see how great and ineffable are the Giver and the motive which prompts him to grant us his blessings. But the gift itself is equally glorious and inexpressible. We hear from our text that God through love does not give us a dollar, a horse, a cow, an eye, a kingdom, or even the heavens with the sun and stars, nor the whole creation, but he gives us "his only begotten Son," who is life unto himself in everything.

This gift must surely arouse within us the deepest emotions of happiness, so that our hearts will ever be glad and leap for joy. Even as the Giver, God himself, is endless and incomprehensible in his love, so the gift itself, his Son, is eternal and unspeakable. God in his gift bestows himself with all that he is, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8): "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The victory over the devil, sin, death, and hell, as well as the gift of heaven, righteousness, and eternal life, is ours; yea, all things are ours now, because we have the Son as our gift, in whom all else is comprehended.

If we then truly believe in this gift and accept it in real faith, all creation, be it good or evil, be it life or death, heaven or hell, must be at our service, as St. Paul in another place says: "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3.) Indeed, if we fully consider

this gift, we must confess and say that it is a boon which in value transcends all else in heaven and earth, and in comparison with which all treasures in the world are as a mite to a mountain of gold. But alas, our miserable unbelief and the terrible darkness which enshrouds us, as Christ himself shortly after this complains, prevent our hearts from realizing what a blessing we have in this gift of the Son of God; we hear these glorious words, but they rush by our outward ears, and the heart remains cold and cheerless. When we hear of a house or farm which is for sale on easy terms, we run and are as eager to make the purchase as if our existence depended upon it; but when the glorious Gospel is preached, that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for its salvation, we are shamefully and sinfully careless and lazy about hearing and accepting this blessed truth. Who is at the bottom of this wicked indifference and carelessness as to the greatest gift, so that we do not accept it nor derive from it joy and consolation? No one but the old devil himself; he blinds our hearts to such a degree that we permit the preaching of this precious Gospel to go by unheeded, while we in the meanwhile busy ourselves with temporal cares.

For this reason I remarked, at the beginning of this sermon, that we ought to repeat these words when we get out of bed in the morning and again when we retire in the evening, so that we may know them right well and praise God for his unutterable blessings. For surely all, the Giver, his love, and the Gift bestowed so undeservedly, simply through love, are most glorious and beyond our comprehension. The gift is one freely given, and will ever remain a gracious blessing which cannot be borrowed, lent, nor bought; all we have to do to obtain it is to hold out our hand and to receive willingly and gladly this treasure. Alas, that our hands and hearts are so reluctant and even unwilling to take such a glorious gift, which is so freely offered, and which is designed to be ours for evermore!

What shall those people be called who refuse to accept a kind gift and blessing? Suppose a poor, ragged beggar, nearly exhausted with hunger, meets with a great and charitable prince, who offers to give him a residence and a great yearly income, and to make him a lord, but that the beggar haughtily turns away from his benefactor without accepting his kindness, what would this foolish man be called by the world? Surely everybody would say that he is crazy and acts more like a brute than a human being. This would be the verdict of the world. Here, however, there is offered to the world no palace nor principality, no kingdom nor imperial domain, but the Son of God, and God himself urges the world to accept and keep this gift. But alas, we men are the ones who refuse to accept this gift; we turn our backs upon God, the kind Giver. From this we can judge what a great and horrible sin unbelief is, for it is not natural that men should refuse a gift and willingly turn from it.

This proves how mad and thoughtless the world is; she does not rejoice at this gift of God, and refuses to receive it when offered. No doubt she would be quick to stretch out her hands for it if it were a dollar or a new coat; but as it is the Son of God, every one acts as if the gift were valueless.

"The world" is mentioned by name in this connection as the ungrateful one who spurns this gift which is offered to her freely. For what has the world done to merit such love and mercy of God? Nothing at all. She is the devil's bride, the greatest enemy of God and the greatest blasphemer. Yet we read here: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

My hearer, inscribe this truth deeply in your heart. And since you have now heard who God is, and what his gift is, which he gives alone through love, hear also what the world is. She is constituted of a multitude of people who do not believe in God and who make him a liar; yea, they blaspheme his name and Word, and persecute it. Hence they are those who disobey father and mother, who are murder

ers, adulterers, treacherous persons, thieves, hypocrites, and the like, as we, alas, can see but too clearly every day of our life. The world is full of falsehood and blasphemy. Nevertheless God, through love, gives his Son to this bride of the devil, his greatest foe and persecutor.

This fact also magnifies the gift. God does not regard the sins and crimes of the world, nor her persecution of his name and Word, so as to withhold his gift on that account. It would seem as if God were too holy and his gift too precious to endure the perversion and wickedness of the world. But God does not regard the sins of the world, whether they be against the first or against the second table of the law, as too great to permit the manifestation of his love toward her; yea, on account of her sins and great misery, in which we all would have to perish if God did not grant us his help, he is merciful, and prompted by his love, he comes to our assistance.

Ought we then not to love such a merciful God in return and to trust implicitly in him who forgives sins, and will not suffer the ungrateful world to perish for her transgressions, which are innumerable? Yea, the sins of every one of us are innumerable; who then could enumerate the sins of the whole world? Yet we read that God is ready to forgive all our transgressions; for from the love of God comes the forgiveness of sins. We ought to consider this attentively. If God gives so much, yea, even himself, to the world, which is his natural enemy, we are forced to conclude that his mercy and grace will also manifest itself toward us, no matter what our experiences are during this life. Therefore we ought to trust in this love, and hope for every blessing from God for Christ's sake.

Such thoughts must encourage the heart and make it glad. I and many Christians have to confess that while we were in popery we lived in great wickedness and idolatry, and were guilty of many a sin. God however did not punish such wickedness as we deserved, but manifested his love by revealing again through the Gospel his Son, whom he had given to the world. We were again permitted to hear and to understand the glorious Gospel, proclaiming that God is not wroth with the world, but that he loves us and has given his Son in our behalf. Alas, we are ungrateful and do not realize this truth as we should, else would our hearts be filled with joy, and we would be determined not only to serve God right willingly, but also to suffer without complaint everything in his service, on account of the precious treasure which we have. It is our unbelief which prevents such joy and seeks the pleasures of the world, which come from the devil and are accursed.

We have now considered four parts in our text, namely, the Giver of the gift, the gift itself, how it is given, and to whom it is given. It is impossible to express fully in words the great importance of these four considerations.

Now follow the *causa finalis*, what purpose God has in view in the bestowal of this gift. It contains no outward advantages for us; we are neither clothed by it, nor fed, nor sheltered: much less is it injurious to our bodies; it contains no poison. Thus he gives his word, Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar, not to our injury but to our salvation. This gift of the only begotten Son is granted unto us to this end, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

From this declaration we learn that this gift does not bring us money, goods, honor, or power in this world, for all such benefits would be but transitory. Yea, if we had all these things we would nevertheless still be under the dominion of the devil. But now when the Son of God is given us, through the Father's love toward us, it follows that we are freed from sin, death and hell, if we believe in the Saviour; for he crushed the head of the serpent and despoiled it of its power; he slew sin and devoured death and extinguished the fire of hell, so that they are all vanquished for evermore and deprived of their supremacy over us. So great and glorious was this

gift. Honor, praise, and glory be unto God, the merciful Giver of this blessing, for ever and for ever, Amen.

Surely we have reason enough to feel happy at this occurrence, especially since Christ himself asserts in our text that he was given us to overpower hell and to make our timid hearts bold and full of cheerfulness. Through the firm assurance that we have a reconciled God in heaven, who loves us and who through love gave his Son for us, so that we should not perish but have everlasting life, we are made glad; for we know that death has now no authority over us, and that eternal life is ours in Christ.

This truth we cannot learn or understand too well; therefore we ought to pray every day that God may through his Holy Spirit inscribe these words deeply in our hearts, that these may be illumined and enlivened thereby. Then will we become true theologians, who know Christ aright and adhere to his doctrine, prepared to suffer for this faith all ills and adversities which, in the providence of God, may visit us. But inasmuch as we do not value these words as we should, and only hear them with our outward ears, they cannot prove their power in our hearts; we remain to-day as we were yesterday, and it is a sin and a shame that we see not with our eyes nor hear with our ears. Most certainly will the damned cry out on the day of judgment and lament, because they were so careless about the preaching and hearing of these words of consolation while yet on earth.

Let us now consider in what way this glorious gift ought to be received, in what receptacle this precious treasure should be securely laid and guarded. It is of great importance to know this. Christ himself points it out to us in the words: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This testimony is plain and clear. It declares that faith, that is, a firm confidence in the mercy and love of God in Christ, is the receptacle into which we should receive and in which we should keep the gift of the Son of God. Love and mercy prompt God to give us such a boon, while we can receive and retain it only through faith. No work or merit of ours avails us anything in this; for even our best works are worthless in this regard. We must stretch forth our hands in faith; and as God through love is the Giver, so we must through faith in Christ be the receivers of his gift. We must believe what our text tells us, that God is kind and merciful, and that he manifests his love toward us in sending his only begotten Son into our flesh and blood, to take upon himself our sins, as John the Baptist and the prophet Isaiah declare: "This is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." With such a gift, and assured of the love of God, we can stay our hearts against the assaults of sin and the accusations of our conscience; for we know that he is not wroth nor terrible, but that for Christ's sake he is kind and gracious unto us. Whoever believes this is truly happy and blessed, for this gift is so great and powerful that it crushes sin, death, death, and every evil. As a burning fire devours a little drop of water, thus are the sins of the whole world annihilated when they come in contact with Christ; yea, if we cling to Him in faith, our sins will be removed and destroyed, even as a straw is devoured in a mighty conflagration.

Christ himself tells us in our Gospel: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The words "whosoever believeth in him" are of especial importance here. Christ says nothing at all of good works as means unto salvation. Faith alone can and must receive this gift. Therefore we are undisturbed by the noise of our adversaries; we cling firmly to this doctrine, for here it is said: "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." If we doubt this, or change it, we accuse Christ of falsehood and set ourselves up as judges over him.

What glorious words of consolation and eternal life! God grant that we may faithfully receive them into our hearts. Whoever has accepted them in faith will not fear the devil, nor sin, nor death, but will exclaim, in great joy and firm assurance: I am comforted, for I now have the Son of God given unto me through the Father's love toward the world. This I firmly believe, because the Word of God, the holy Gospel, thus declares it unto me. And thy Word, O God, and thy Son Jesus Christ cannot lie; this I know and believe. Wherein I am weak in faith, give me strength to receive and to retain this thy great gift and love, else it will be of no advantage unto me. It behooves us therefore to become more and more acquainted with this gift and to be comforted by it; this however can only take place through faith, as Christ teaches us. The stronger our faith, the greater will be our happiness and safety, so that we can cheerfully do and suffer what God imposes upon us, and this because we know that he is merciful and full of love toward us.

Perhaps you will object and say: Yea, if I were as pious and holy as Peter, Paul, or the holy Virgin, then would I dare to believe and be comforted with this gift. They were saints, and no doubt for them this gift was intended, but I, a poor sinner, have no right to appropriate it unto myself, for I have so often and in such manifold ways offended and opposed God. Such thoughts cannot be avoided when we hear this Gospel, and then think of our condition and great transgressions. But we must watch that these thoughts do not gain such power over us that we lose sight of the Gospel; to this we must speedily return and in this find comfort. Such thoughts are really nothing but unbelief, which would keep us from this gift and its comfortable assurance of the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Christ.

Unbelief, however, can be successfully combated only with the Word of God. Christ our Savior gives unto us this Word, so that we dare not doubt its truthfulness. He tells us that his Father in heaven, the everlasting God, so loved "the world," that he ever gave for it his only begotten Son. Now it is evident that the expression "the world" does not mean Mary, Peter, Paul, etc., but that it includes the whole human race, one and all, without any exception. Or have you any doubt that you are a human being? If so, feel your chest or your nose, and you will find out whether you are different from other people. Why then will you persistently exclude yourself from the application of this expression "world," when Christ so plainly includes in it all men, and does not apply it merely to the Virgin Mary, to St. Peter, or to St. Paul? If you and I refuse to accept Christ, because we think that we have no part in him, we make him a liar, for he said that he was given for the whole world. No, we must rather come to the opposite conclusion, that we have as good a right to this gift as Peter or Paul, or any one else has, simply because we are men, and as such a part of the world. Let us therefore beware and not doubt God's words by thinking that we cannot be sure whether we belong to those to whom and for whom he gave his Son that they might have everlasting life. With such thoughts we deny that God speaks the truth.

Let us therefore shun such doubts, and the thoughts producing them, as we would shun the very devil himself. Let us be firm in faith and say: We know that God gave his gift not only to Peter and Paul, for if he had desired to bestow it only upon those perfectly worthy of it, he would have given it to the holy angels, who are pure, undefiled spirits, or to the sun and moon, which obey perfectly the law of God by continuing in their prescribed course; but we read otherwise, namely, that "God gave his Son unto the world." Therefore we all have a part in this glorious gift, just as well as David or any apostle. Who was David? Did he not commit gross sins? Who were the apostles? Were they not all sinners and unworthy of this gift?

Let no one, therefore, reason thus: I am a sinner, and am not as holy as

St. Peter, consequently I dare not appropriate this gift to my consolation. Far be it from us to harbor such thoughts. Let us believe in God's Word implicitly; and because he says that he gave this gift unto the world, let us all, since we belong to the world, no matter who we are, lay hold of it in faith; for if we do not, we deny the truthfulness of God, and thereby commit a great and damnable sin.

Some perhaps might think: If God had told this unto me especially, I would believe it and be assured that it also applies to me. In this you err, my friend; God intentionally speaks in a general way, and says that he gave his Son unto the whole world, that all may be saved and none be excluded. If there are any who are not benefited by this gift, they are themselves to blame; they exclude themselves, through wicked unbelief, from the blessing of the gift of God, and will have to render an account for their faithlessness; yea, their own words will condemn them. Besides, we have the holy sacraments, instituted of Christ himself, to be employed by us as means of grace, by which we are to obtain and to appropriate to ourselves this gift.

This is a brief and simple explanation of our beautiful and precious text to-day, which is so comprehensive that it can never be exhausted. It contains the chief doctrine of salvation, that God, through love towards the wicked world, gave his only begotten Son to be its Saviour. Let every one learn what a glorious treasure and consolation the Christians have.—Sermons of Great Preachers by Simons.

[Martin Luther was born the son of a miner, at Eisleben, in Saxony, November 10, 1483. He graduated from the University at Erfurt, became doctor of philosophy, and in 1505 gave up the world to be a monk. He was made doctor of divinity in 1512. Five years later, in fulfillment of his vows as a defender of Holy Scripture, he attacked, in ninety-five theses, the blasphemous sale of indulgences by Tetzel. As pope Leo X. sanctioned these practices, Europe was convulsed by a moral shock, and the Reformation began. Neither frowns nor flatteries could silence this bold minister of God. A grand pivot-scene of human history,—perhaps unequaled elsewhere by mortal,—was the firm stand of Luther before assembled monarchs and princes in the Diet at Worms, where he refused to retract in those sublime words: "Here I stand: I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen." In 1522 the New Testament, and in 1534 the Old Testament, were translated by him into German. He died at Eisleben, February 18, 1546.]

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUTLINE OF A SERMON BY MARTIN LUTHER.

[While Luther was combating powerful ecclesiastics on the one hand, on the other he endeavored to spread sound religious doctrine among the common people. He republished in the form of tracts, "to run through the land," several sermons which he had preached in the church at Wittemberg, such as a sermon on the Ten Commandments, and one on the Lord's Prayer. We give an outline of the latter from Merle D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation.]

"When thou prayest, let thy words be few, but thy thoughts and feelings many and deep. The less thou speakest, the better thy prayers. Few words and much thought is a Christian frame. Many words and little thought is heathenish."

"The prayer that is external and of the body is that mumbling of the lips, that outward babble, gone through without attention, and heard and seen of men; but prayer in the spirit and in truth is the inward desire, the motions and sighs that proceed from the depth of the heart. The former is the prayer of hypocrites, and of those who trust in themselves. The latter is the prayer of God's children wno walk in his fear."

"Our Father.—Of all names there is not one which more inclines us towards God than the name of Father. We should feel less love, and derive less consolation, from addressing him as Lord, or God, or Judge. By that word Father, his bowels of compassion are moved; for there is no sound more sweet and prevailing with a father than the voice of his child."

"Whosoever professes that he has a Father in heaven, acknowledges himself to be a stranger on earth; hence, there is in his heart an ardent longing like that of a child that is living among strangers in want and grief, afar from its fatherland. It is as if he said, Alas! my Father, thou art in heaven, and I, thy suffering child, am on earth, far from thee, encompassed with dangers, wants, and mournings."

"Hallowed be thy name.—He who is passionate, abusive, envious, and slanderous, dishonors the name of God in which he has been baptized. Profaning to impious uses a vessel that God has consecrated to himself, he is like a priest who should take the holy cup and give drink to the swine, or gather dung into it."

"Thy kingdom come.—Those who amass property and build magnificent mansions, who strive after what the world can give, and utter this prayer with their lips, resemble those huge organ pipes which incessantly sing with all their power in the churches, without speech, feeling or reason."

Further on Luther attacks the error of pilgrimages, which was then so prevalent: "One goes to Rome, another to St. James, a third builds a chapel, and a fourth endows religious houses, in order to attain to the kingdom of God; but all neglect the one thing needful, which is, to become themselves his kingdom. Why seek the kingdom of God beyond the seas? It is in thy heart it should arise."

"It is an awful thing, to hear us offer this petition, 'Thy will be done.' Where in the church do we see this 'will of God?' One bishop arises against another bishop; one church against another church. Priests, monks, and nuns quarrel, and thwart, and wage war with each other, and everywhere discord prevails. And yet each party declares that there is good will and upright intention; and so, to the honor and glory of God, they altogether do the devil's work."

"Why do we use the words, 'our bread?'—'Give us this day our daily bread.' Because we do not pray for the common bread that heathens partake, and which God gives to all men,—but for 'our' bread, the bread of those who are children of the heavenly Father."

"And what then is this bread of God? It is Jesus Christ our Lord. 'I am the bread of life which came down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.' Therefore let no one be deluded: whatever sermons and instructions do not exhibit and make known Jesus Christ, cannot be the daily bread and nourishment of the souls."

"Of what use is it that such bread has been provided, if it is not served up, and so we are unable to partake of it? It is as if a noble feast were prepared, and none were ready to distribute the bread, to place the meat on the table, or fill the cups, and so the guests should be reduced to feed on the mere sight and smell. Therefore we must preach Christ alone."

"But, say you, what is it to know Christ? and what good will come of it? I answer: to learn and know Christ is to learn and understand what the Apostle declares, namely: that Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Now you understand that, if you acknowledge all your wisdom mere blameworthy foolishness, your righteousness a criminal iniquity, your holiness a guilty pollution, your redemption a miserable sentence of condemnation; if you feel that you are truly, before God and before all creatures, a fool, a sinner, an impure and condemned man: if you manifest, not by word alone but from the bottom of your heart, and by your works,—that there is neither salvation nor comfort for you, save only in Christ. To believe is nothing else than feeding on this bread from heaven."

IMAGES AND THE MASS.

ULRICH ZWINGLI.

Isaiah xliv: 17.

"On the other hand all images must be removed, which serve the purpose of a superstitious veneration, because such veneration is really idolatry. Now we see images put up for *veneration* in the churches, and here and there in the streets. We see them placed, *first of all*, before the eyes of men on the altar. Why are they allowed to stand there where so high things are transacted as the papists say are done in the mass? Will they let a man stand there during the mass? Not they. They then hold these images to be higher than men, and yet they have been cut out of a willow-tree by the hands of men. Thus Isaiah (chap. xliv.) justly rebukes such men who worship the works which their own hands have fashioned. Then one bows to them, and bares the head before them, which God has forbidden. Consider if this be not open idolatry. Again, we expend great cost in gold, silver, diamonds, and pearls on them; nay, some images are formed of massive gold and silver; and, in others, the vesture is so full of them, that for that part, it might stand upright if this were wanted. It is of no use to object: we present not this wealth to idols, but to honor the blessed saints who are in heaven; for if we would do honor to the saints with the riches of this world, we ought to do it in the way God has commanded us, and as the saints themselves have done, viz., by bestowing it on the poor. What we ought to give to the poor destitute images of God, we give to the gold-bedizened images of men, for these idols are but the images of men, while the living man is the image of God. Is it not plain, then, that in thus giving to these idols against the command of God, we give what we ought to give to the poor? Nor has there been any ring, precious stone or jewel, so costly and dear that it repented an ambitious woman to hang it on a wooden idol. And if we had exhorted her to give the same to the poor, we verily should not have brought her to it. And why? It makes no show on the poor man, but it makes a show on the idol. Since, then, these idols have been fashioned and adorned out of the carnal ambition, how can we any longer suffer them? Are we not fearful the curse will come upon us? Ps. xcvii: 7: 'Confounded be all that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols.' We burn costly incense before them as the heathen did. Here we commit a twofold sin. Firstly, in that we think the elect of God are honored by such things as the heathen honored their idols with, when we learn from the Acts, chap. xiv., that Paul and Barnabas would not suffer such adoration to be paid to them, but signified they were sent by God to turn men from such folly. The servants of God are not honored with such fool's work, for they themselves never honored God himself therewith. We sin, secondly, in laying that before an idol which should be given to the poor. Then, lastly, like the heathen, we call them by the names of those whose images they represent. Thus, we name one piece of carved wood the mother of God, another St. Nicholas, and the third, the Holy Hildegarde,

and so on. This were in itself less, but we hold this image in such veneration, that if one were to call it an idol, which it is, he would be liable to punishment. Nay, we have heard of those who have broken into the prisons, and actually slain those who took away these idols. Why did they do this? 'Oh! they have burnt or stolen our blessed Lord God and the saints!' Whom do they call our Lord God? The idol! So, then, they had an idol for a god. If they had had the Father in heaven for their God, who is invisible to human eyes, they had very little concerned themselves about what was done to a mere image. An old man may remember the time when not the hundredth part of the images were in the churches that are now to be found in them. How, then, have our forefathers honored God; or, rather, how have they dishonored him in not possessing so many images as we have? Did it seem good to them to have no images or few of them? then woe to us who would increase them. For although it may be said, adoration is not paid to the idol but to God and the blessed saint, this avails not, because, so far from honoring God and the saints by such species of adoration, superstition and idolatry are committed the moment we set up an image and adore it. And these vain people put innocent Christians to death, who remove that which turns the soul away from God. Oh! is it not evident from this that they are idolaters? Since, then, real danger exists, that faith will be diminished where images are hung or set up in the temples, they being, as experience teaches, easily worshiped and adored, they must be removed from thence, since there is danger of their being adored. We mean, however, images alone that are hurtful to true piety, and which have a tendency to diminish our faith in God himself, such as the images of men placed on the altars and in the churches. The papists suppose they advance a very weighty objection, when they say, images are the books of the simple. Tell me, however, where has God commanded us to learn out of such a book? How comes it that we had 'the cross' so many years before us, and yet have not learned salvation in Christ, or true faith in God? Take a child and place it before an image of the Savior, and give it no instruction, and let us see if it will learn from the image that Christ has suffered for us. Is it said, Nay; but it must be taught also by the Word? Then the admission is made that it must be instructed not by the image but by the Word. I verily believe that the whole of papal Christendom would rather have their images or idols than the Word of God. For when the Word is presented it is immediately seen as in a glass that the whole papacy is a lie. Therefore, they let the sufferings of Christ be sufficiently well painted on the wall, and represented in statuary, and let poor fools hang silver and gold thereon, and kiss the stone feet, provided only they do not learn what the sufferings of Christ mean. For as soon as we have learned this lesson, that he is our Redeemer, our redemption price, and our only way to God, we no longer buy the kingdom of heaven from the papacy. It is next objected: The images incite to devotion, which is proved by the following example: A Christian man goes across a field, and seeing the sufferings of Christ oftentimes painted, he bows himself, bares his head, and puts up a prayer. Where has God taught that we should do him such honor through idols, and by the performance of such gestures before them? Such arguments are sheer trifling; God everywhere rejects such adoration. He says: 'When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts,' Isaiah i. 12. Mark well, here he rejects and prohibits honor being done to idols. Is it rejoined: 'The man in the field kneels down—with his heart he says praise and thanks to him for his holy sufferings—he utters some prayer, which reminds him of God; but if he found no image on the way, he would neither think of God nor the saints; therefore, the images are good and not evil.' Answer: 'Know ye not, that "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven?" Matt. vii. 21.

Perceive you not that God puts little value on mouth-worship, and, on the contrary, the highest value on doing his will? But this the images teach us not, nor do they incite us to it; for they have never stirred up to anything but *a lazy-minded blind devotion.* The true, genuine worship of God is to bear him ever in our hearts. Such a heart is not conferred by any external gazing at an image, but alone by *the illuminating God.*' But here some will say: 'It ought to be taught that the idols are not to be held for anything, applied to for nothing, ought not to be held as holy, and, in a word, all erroneous doctrine in respect to them put away.' Answer: 'Certainly this ought to be done, but they themselves ought also at the same time to be removed. When you drive away the devil you ought to stop up all passages by which he may again enter. While, therefore, the gospel is preached, and men are instructed in pure doctrine, the idols ought to be removed, that men may not fall back into the same errors; for as storks return to their old nests, so men to their old errors, if the way to them be not barred.'"—From "Zwingli; or, The Rise of the Reformation in Switzerland," by R. Christoffel. Translated from the German by John Cochran, Esq. Published by T. & T. Clark, 38 George St., Edinburgh.

[The foregoing shows that before a reformation or revival takes place the iconoclast must do his work. Substitute for images and the mass the religious abuses of today and the sermon will be up-to-date. It may be noted that impassioned utterance goes hand in hand with sound reasoning and careful thought. To carry hot coals to the people one needs a shovel of clear thought, with a good long handle of sense and reason. But the prevailing difficulty today is empty shovels. Ulrich Zwingli was born in 1484 in Wildhaus of Tackenburg. His father was a magistrate and two of his uncles, churchmen. At eighteen he became a school-teacher, but continued Bible study, and at twenty-two was called to be pastor of the third part of the canton. At thirty-two he was pastor of Einsiedeln, where he preached to pilgrims from all over the world, with the result that money brought for indulgences was given to the poor. He began his preaching at Zurich by an exposition of Matthew, which he said was the style of preaching of the early church fathers. His preaching aroused opposition from Rome and the government called a conference, at which Zwingli triumphed over Faber, the vicar-general of the bishop of Constance. The council decided preachers should continue to teach the gospel and a number of cantons decided for a free gospel. He was killed at the head of an army in the battle of Cappel, Oct. 11, 1531, in which twenty-five fellow-ministers lost their lives. He and Luther disagreed on doctrine, but Zwingli showed the true Christian spirit, for while Luther burned Zwingli's writings, the latter continued to circulate Luther's works, even those which condemned Zwingli.]

A LIVELY DESCRIPTION OF OUR JUSTIFICATION.

WILLIAM TYNDALE.

Romans iii: 24.

Mark, therefore, the way toward justifying, or forgiveness of sin, is the law. God causeth the law to be preached unto us and writeth it in our hearts, and maketh us by good reasons feel that the law is good, and ought to be kept, and that they which keep it not are worthy to be damned. And on the other side, I feel that there is no power in me to keep the law, whereupon it would shortly follow that I should despair if I were not shortly holpen. But God, who hath begun to cure me, and hath laid that corrosive unto my sores, goes forth in his cure, and setteth his Son Jesus before me, and all his passion and death, and saith to me, This is my dear Son, and he hath prayed for thee, and hath suffered all this for thee, and for his sake I will forgive thee all that thou hast done against this good law; and I will heal thy flesh and teach thee to keep this law, if thou wilt learn. And I will bear with thee, and take all in good part that thou doest, till thou canst do better. And in the mean season, notwithstanding thy weakness, I will love thee no less than I do the angels in heaven, so thou wilt be diligent to learn. And I will assist thee, and keep and defend thee, and be thy shield and care for thee.

And the heart here begins to mollify and soften, and to receive health and believes the mercy of God, and, in believing, is saved from the fear of everlasting death, and is made sure of everlasting life; and then being overcome with his kindness, begins to love again, and to submit herself unto the laws of God, to learn them and to walk in them.

Note now the order; first God gives me light to see the goodness and righteousness of the law, and mine own sin and unrighteousness. Out of which knowledge springeth repentance. Now repentance teaches me not that the law is good, and I evil, but a light which the Spirit of God hath given me, out of which light repentance springeth.

Then the same Spirit worketh in mine heart, trust and confidence to believe the mercy of God and his truth, that he will do as he hath promised, which belief saveth me. And immediately out of that trust springeth love toward the law of God again. And whatsoever a man worketh of any other love than this, it pleaseth not God, nor is that love godly.

Now, love does not receive this mercy, but faith only; out of which faith love springeth, by which love I pour out again upon my neighbor that goodness which I have received of God by faith. Hereof ye see that I cannot be justified without repentance, and yet repentance justifies me not. And hereof ye see that I cannot have a faith to be justified and saved; except love springeth thereof immediately, and yet love justifies me not before God. For my natural love to God, again, does not make me first see and feel the kindness of God in Christ, but faith through preaching. For we love not God first, to compel him to love again; but he loved us first and

gave his Son for us, that we might see love, and love again, saith St. John in his first epistle: which love of God to usward we receive by Christ through faith, saith St. Paul.

And this example have I set out for them in divers places, but their blind eyes have no power to see it, covetousness hath so blinded them. And when we say, Faith only justifies us; that is to say, faith only receiveth the mercy wherewith God justifies us and forgives us; we mean not faith which has no repentance, and faith which has no love unto the laws of God again, and unto good works, as wicked hypocrites falsely belie us.

For how, then, should we suffer, as we do, all misery, to call the blind and ignorant unto repentance and good works, which do now but consent unto all evil, and study mischief all day long, for all their justifying by good works? Let M. More improve this with his sophistry, and set forth his own doctrine, that we may see the reason of it and walk in light.

Hereof ye see what faith it is that justifies us. The faith in Christ's blood, of a repenting heart toward the law, justifies us alone, and not all manner of faiths. Ye must understand, therefore, that ye may see to come out of More's blind maze, that there are many faiths, and that all faiths are not one faith, though they all are called with one general name. There is an historical faith, without feeling in the heart, wherewith I may believe the whole history of the Bible, and yet not set mine heart earnestly thereto, taking it for the food of my soul, to learn to believe and trust God, to love him, to dread him, and fear him by the doctrine and examples thereof; but to seem learned, and to know the history to dispute and make merchandise, as we have examples enough. And the faith wherewith a man doeth miracles is another gift than the faith of a repenting heart, to be saved through Christ's blood, and the one is no kin to the other, though M. More would have them so appear. Neither is the devil's faith, and the pope's faith (wherewith they believe that there is a God, and that Christ is, and all the story of the Bible, and may yet stand with all wickedness and full consent to evil) kin unto the faith of them that hate evil, and repent of their misdeeds, and acknowledge their sins, and are fled with full hope and trust of mercy unto the blood of Christ.

And when he saith, If faith certify our hearts that we are in the favor of God, and our sins forgiven and become good, ere we do good works; as the tree must be first good, ere it bring forth good fruit, by Christ's doctrine; then we make good works but a shadow wherewith a man is never the better. Nay, sir, we make good works fruits, whereby our neighbor is the better, and whereby God is honored and our flesh tamed. And we make of them sure tokens whereby we know that our faith is no feigned imagination and dead opinion, made with captivating our understandings after the pope's traditions, but a lively thing wrought by the Holy Ghost.

And when he disputes that if they that have faith, have love unto the law, and purpose to fulfill it, then faith alone justifies not; how will he prove that argument? He juggles with this word "alone": and would make the people believe that we said, how a bare faith that is without all other company, of repentance, love and other virtues, yea, and without God's Spirit, too, did justify us, so that we should not care to do good. But the Scripture so takes not "alone," nor do we so mean, as M. More knows well enough. When a horse bears a saddle and a man is therein, we may well say, that the horse only, and alone bears the saddle, and is not helped of the man in bearing thereof. But he would make men understand that we meant, the horse bare the saddle empty, and no man therein; let him mark this to see his ignorance, which, would that it were not coupled with malice. Every man that hath wit hath a will, too, and then by M. More's argument, wit only gives not the light of understanding. Now the conclusion is false, and the contrary true. For the wit without help of

the will gives the light of the understanding; neither does the will work at all, until the wit have determined this or that to be good or bad. Now, what is faith but a spiritual light of the understanding, and an inward knowledge or feeling of mercy? Out of which knowledge love doth spring. But love brought me not that knowledge, for I knew it ere I loved. So that love is the process of nature, to dispute from the cause to the effect, helps not at all to the feeling that God is merciful to me, no more than the loving heart, and kind behavior of an obedient wife to her husband makes her see his love and kindness to her, for many such have unkind husbands. But by his kind deeds to her, does she see his love. Even so my love and deeds make me not see God's love to me in the process of nature; but his kind deeds to me, in that he gave his Son for me, make me see his love and to love again.

Our love and good works make not God first love us, and change him from hate to love, as the Turk, Jews and vain papists mean, but his love and deeds make us love, and change us from hate to love. For he loved us when we were evil, and his enemies, as Paul testifies in divers places; and he chose us, to make us good and to show us love, and to draw us to him that we should love again.

The father loves his child, when it has no power to do good, and when it must be suffered to run after its own lusts without law, and he never loves it better than then, to make it better, and to show it love, to love again. If ye could see what is written in the first epistle of John, though all the other Scripture were laid aside, ye should see all this.

And ye must understand that we sometimes dispute forward, from the cause to the effect, and must beware that we are not therewith beguiled. We say summer is come, and therefore all is green, and dispute forward. For summer is the cause of the greenness. We say the trees are green, and therefore summer is come, and dispute backward from the effect to the cause. For the green trees make not summer, but make summer known. So we dispute backward—the man doth good deeds, and profitable unto his neighbor, he must therefore love God; he loves God, he must therefore have a true faith and see mercy.

And yet my works make not my love, nor my love my faith, nor my faith God's mercy; but contrary, God's mercy makes my faith, and my faith my love, and my love my works. And if the pope could see mercy, and work of love to his neighbor; and not sell his works to God for heaven, after M. More's doctrine, we needed not so to settle disputing of faith.

And when M. More alleges Paul to the Corinthians, to prove that faith may be without love, he proves nothing, but juggles only. He saith, It is evident by the words of Paul, that a man may have a faith to do miracles without love, and may give all his goods in without love, and his body to burn for the name of Christ, and all without charity. Well, I will not stick with him; he may so do, without charity, and without faith thereto. Then a man may have faith without faith. Yea, verily, because there are many differences of faith, as I have said, and not all faiths one faith. We read in the books of Cyprian, that there were martyrs who suffered martyrdom for the name of Christ, all the year long, and were tormented and healed again, and then brought forth afresh. Which martyrs believed as ye do, that the pain of their martyrdom should be a deserving and merit enough, not only to deserve heaven for themselves, but to make satisfaction for the sins of other men thereto, and gave pardons of their merits, after the example of the pope's doctrine, and forgave the sins of other men, who had openly denied Christ, and wrote unto Cyprian, that he should receive those men who had denied Christ into the congregation again, at the satisfaction of their merits. For which pride, Cyprian wrote to them, and called them the devil's martyrs, and not God's. Those martyrs had a faith without faith. For had they believed that all mercy is given for Christ's blood-shedding, they would have sent other men thither,

and would have suffered their own martyrdom for the love of their neighbors only, to serve them, and to testify the truth of God in our Savior Jesus, unto the world, to save at the least some, that is, the elect, for whose sake Paul suffered all things, and not to win heaven. If I work for a worldly purpose, I get no reward in heaven: even so if I work for heaven or a higher place in heaven, I get there no reward. But I must do my work for the love of my neighbor, because he is my brother, and the price of Christ's blood, and because Christ hath deserved it, and desires it of me, and then my reward is great in heaven.

And all they which believe that their sins be forgiven them, and they received, as the Scripture testifies, unto the inheritance of heaven for Christ's merits, the same love Christ, and their brethren for his sake; and do all things for their sakes only; not once thinking of heaven when they work, but of their brethren's need. When they suffer themselves above might, then they comfort their soul with the remembrance of heaven, that this wretchedness shall have an end, and we shall have a thousand-fold pleasures and rewards in heaven, not for the merits of our deservings, but given us freely for Christ's. And he that hath that love, hath the right faith, and he that hath that faith, hath the right love. For I can not love my neighbor for Christ's sake, except I first believe that I have received such mercy of Christ. Nor can I believe that I have received such mercy of Christ, but I must love my neighbor for his sake, seeing that he so urgently desires me.

And when he alleges St. James, it is answered him in the Mammon, and Augustine answers him. And St. James expounds himself. For he saith in the first chapter, God, which begat us of his own will with the word of truth, which word of truth is his promises of mercy and forgiveness in our Savior Jesus, by which he begat us, gave us life, and made us a new creature through a fast faith. And James goes and rebukes the opinion and false faith of them that think it enough to be saved by, if they believe that there is but one God, and that Christ was born of a virgin, and a thousand things which a man may believe, and yet not believe in Christ, to be saved from sin through him. And that James speaks of another faith than at the beginning, appears by his example. The devils have faith, saith he: yea, but the devils have no faith that can repent of evil, or to believe in Christ to be saved through him, or that can love God and work his will of love. Now, Paul speaks of a faith that is in Christ's blood, to be saved thereby, which works immediately through love of the benefit received. And James at the beginning speaks of a faith that abides trial, saying, The trying of your faith worketh, or causeth, patience; but the faith of the devils will abide no trying, for they will not work God's will, because they love him not. And in like manner is it of the faith of them that repent not, or that think themselves without sin. For except a man feel out of what danger Christ hath delivered him, he cannot love the work. And therefore James saith right, that no such faith that will not work, can justify a man.

And when Paul saith, Faith only justifieth; and James saith, That a man is justified by works and not by faith only, there is a great difference between Paul's only, and James' only. For Paul's only is to be understood, that faith justifieth in the heart and before God, without help of works, yea, and ere I can work. For I must receive life through faith to work with, ere I can work. But James' only is thus to be understood, that faith does not so justify, that nothing justifies save faith. For deeds do justify also. But faith justifies in the heart and before God, and the deeds before the world, only, and make the other seen; as ye may perceive by the Scripture.

For Paul saith (Rom. iv.), If Abraham have works, he hath whereof to rejoice, but not before God. For if Abraham had received those promises of deserving, then had it been Abraham's praise and not God's, as thou mayest see in the text; neither had

God showed Abraham mercy and grace, but had only given him his duty and deserving. But in that Abraham received all the mercy that was showed him, freely through faith, out of the deservings of the Seed that was promised him, as thou mayest see by Genesis and by the Gospel of John, where Christ testifies that Abraham saw his day and rejoiced, and of that joy doubtless he wrought, it is God's praise, and the glory of his mercy. And the same mayest thou see by James, when he saith, Abraham offered his son, and so was the Scripture fulfilled, that Abraham believed, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was thereby made God's friend.

How was it fulfilled? Before God? Nay, it was fulfilled before God many years before, and he was God's friend many years before, even from the first appointment that was made between God and him. Abraham received promises of all mercy, and believed and trusted God, and went and wrought out of that faith. But it was fulfilled before us who cannot see the heart, as James saith, I will show thee my faith out of my works, and as the angel said to Abraham, Now I know that thou dreadest God. Not but that he knew it before, but for us spake he that, who can see nothing in Abraham more than in other men, save by his works.

And what works meant James? Verily, the works of mercy. As if a brother or a sister lack raiment or sustenance, and yet be not moved to compassion nor feel their diseases, what faith have ye then? No faith, to be sure, that feeleth the mercy that is in Christ. For they that feel that, are merciful again and thankful. But look on the works of our spirituality, which will not only be justified with works before the world, but also before God. They have had all Christendom to rule this eight hundred years, and as they only are anointed in the head, so have they only been king and emperor, and have had all power in their hands, and have been the doers only, and the leaders of those shadows that have had the name of princes, and have led them whither they would, and have breathed into their brains what they listed. And they have wrought the world out of peace and unity, and every man out of his welfare; and are become alone well at ease, only free, only at liberty, only have all things and only do nought therefore, only lay on other men's backs and bear not themselves. And the good works of them that wrought out of faith, and gave their goods and lands to feed the poor, they devour them also alone. And what works preach they? Only those that are to them profitable, and whereby they reign in men's consciences as God; to offer, to give, to be prayed for, and to be delivered out of purgatory, and to redeem your sins of them, and to worship ceremonies, and to be shriven, and so forth.

And when M. More is come to himself, and saith, The first faith and the first justifying is given us without our deserving—God be thanked, and I would fain that he would describe me what he means by the second justifying. I know no more to do, than that when I have received all mercy and all forgiveness of Christ freely, to go and pour out the same upon my neighbor.

M. More saith, David lost not his faith when he committed adultery. I answer, No, and therefore he could not continue in sin, but repented as soon as his fault was told him. But was he not reconciled by faith only, and not by deeds? Said he not, Have mercy on me, Lord, for thy great mercy, and for the multitude of thy mercies put away my sin? And again, Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. That is, Let me hear thy voice that my sin is forgiven, and then I am safe and will rejoice. And afterwards he acknowledged that God delighteth not in sacrifices for sin, but that a troubled spirit and a broken heart is that which God requireth. And when the peace was made, he prays boldly and familiarly to God, that he would be good to Sion and Jerusalem, and saith that then last of all, when God hath given us of mercy, and hath done us good for our evil, we shall offer sacrifice of thanks to him again. So that our deeds are but thanksgiving When we have sinned, we go with a repenting heart unto Christ's blood, and there

wash it off through faith. And our deeds are but thanksgiving to God to help our neighbors at their need, for which our neighbors and each of them owe us as much again at our need. So that the testament or forgiveness of sins, is built upon faith in Christ's blood, and not on works. M. More will run to the pope for forgiveness. By what merits does the pope forgive? By Christ's. And Christ hath promised all his merits to them that repent and believe; he has not given them unto the pope to sell. And in your absolutions ye oft absolve without enjoining of penance. He must have a purpose to do good works, will ye say. That condition is set before him to do, out of the mercy that he hath received, and not to receive mercy out of them. But the papists cannot repent out of the heart. And therefore cannot feel the mercy that faith brings, and therefore cannot be merciful to their neighbors, to do their works for their sakes. But they feign a sorrow for their sin in which they ever continue, and so mourn for them in the morning, that they may laugh in them ere midday again. And then they imagine to themselves popish deeds, to make satisfaction to God, and make an idol of him.

And finally, that good works, as to give alms and such like, justify not of themselves, is manifest. For as the good who are taught of God, do them well, of very love to God and Christ, and of their neighbors for Christ's sake; even so the evil do them of vainglory and a false faith, wickedly, as we have examples in the pharisees; so that a man must be good ere he can do good. And so is it of the purpose to do them; one's purpose is good and another's evil; so that we must be good ere a good purpose come. Now, then, to love the law of God, and to consent thereto, and to have it written in thine heart, and to profess it, so that thou art ready of thine own accord to do it and without compulsion, is to be righteous: that I grant, and that love may be called righteousness, before God, passive, and the life and quickness of the soul, passive. And so far as a man loves the law of God, so far is he righteous, and so much as he lacketh of love toward his neighbor, after the example of Christ, so much he lacketh of righteousness. And that which makes a man love the law of God, makes a man righteous, and justifies him effectively and actually, and makes him alive as a workman, and cause efficient. Now, what is it that makes a man to love? Verily, not the deeds, for they follow and spring of love, if they be good. Neither the preaching of the law, for that quickens not the heart (Gal. iii.), but causes wrath (Rom. vi.), and utters sin only (Rom. iii.). And, therefore, Paul saith, that righteousness springs not out of the deeds into the heart, as the Jews and the pope mean; but contrary, the deeds of the law spring out of the righteousness of the heart, if they be good. As when a father pronounces the law, that the child shall go to school, it saith nay. For that killeth his heart, and all his lusts, so that he has no power to love it. But what makes his heart alive to love it? Verily, fair promises of love and kindness, that he shall have a gentle schoolmaster, and shall play enough, and shall have many gay things, and so forth. Even so the preaching of faith works love in our souls, and makes them alive, and draws our hearts to God. The mercy that we have in Christ makes us love only, and only bringeth the spirit of life into our souls.

And therefore, saith Paul, we are justified by faith and by grace without deeds; that is, ere the deeds come. For faith only brings the spirit of life, and delivers our souls from fear of damnation, which is in the law, and ever maketh peace between God and us, as oft as there is any variance between us. And finally, when the peace is made between God and us, and all is forgiven through faith in Christ's blood, and we begin to love the law, we were never the nearer except faith went with us, to supply the lack of full love, in that we have promises, that the little we have is taken as of worth, and accepted till more come. And again, when our frailty has overthrown us, and fear and damnation has invaded our consciences, we were utterly lost, if faith were not by, to help us up again, in that we are promised that whensoever

we repent of evil and come to the right way again, it shall be forgiven for Christ's sake. For when we are fallen, there is no testament made in works to come, that they shall save us. And therefore the works of repentance, or of the sacraments, can never quiet our consciences, and deliver us from fear of damnation.

And last of all, in temptation, tribulation, and adversities, we should perish daily, except faith went with us to deliver us, in that we have promises, that God will assist us, clothe us, feed us, and fight for us, and rid us out of the hands of our enemies. And thus the righteous lives ever by faith, even from faith to faith, that is, as soon as he is delivered out of one temptation another is set before him, to fight against, and to overcome through faith. The Scripture saith, Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and his sins hid, and unto whom the Lord reckons not unrighteousness. So that the only righteousness of him that can but sin, and hath nought of himself to make amends, is the forgiveness of sin, which faith only brings. And as far as we be unrighteous, faith only justifies us actively, and nothing else on our part. And as far as we have sinned, be in sin, or do sin, or shall sin, so far must faith in Christ's blood justify us only, and nothing else. To love, is to be righteous, so far as thou lovest, but not to make righteous nor to make peace. To believe in Christ's blood with a repenting heart, is to make righteous, and the only making of peace and satisfaction toward God. And thus because terms be dark to them that be not expert and exercised, we always set our meaning with clear examples, reporting ourselves unto the hearts and consciences of all men.—British Reformers—Tyndale. Pages 264-274. London, 1536 A. D. The Religious Tract Society.

[William Tyndale was born in Gloucestershire, England, about 1484. When twenty he went to Oxford. After being ordained a priest he became chaplain and tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh of Little Sodbury Manor. Here he planned the translation of the New Testament, going to London and carrying out the task in the home of Humphrey Monmouth, an alderman. When finished he took the precious manuscript to the continent. The printing was begun in Cologne and finished in Worms in 1526. He lived in Antwerp from 1530. He was finally thrown into the dungeon of Vilvorde Castle, near Brussels. He was strangled and his body burnt at the stake Oct. 6, 1536. His last words were a prayer, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."]

OBEYING THE HEAVENLY VISION.

C. F. AKED, OF LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND.

Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.—Acts xxvi: 19.

Neither was Martin Luther when the heavenly vision came to him as he was crawling so painfully up the church stairs on his knees. These stairs, according to the legend, were the very ones on which Pontius Pilate stood when he condemned the Lord to death, and they had been brought by the angels to Rome. Whoever crawled up them on his knees thereby gained a year off from purgatory. As Martin Luther crawled up the stairs, the words of God sounded in his own heart, "The just shall live by faith." He rose from his knees, and all our religious and civil liberty was embryonic there.

Thomas Clarkson was a graduate of Cambridge University. He had won many prizes and honors there. The chancellor offered a great prize for an essay on the theme: "Is it right to enslave men against their will?" Clarkson entered for the prize. Your first business in an argument is to get the facts. Clarkson investigated the matter, and his thesis won the prize. He was riding from Cambridge to London when the thought pressed upon his soul, as though an inspiration: Is it right to enslave men against their will? I have proved it is not right. Then if it is not right it ought not to be done. If it ought not to be done it is wrong. If it is wrong it ought to be destroyed. And if it ought to be destroyed, some one ought to destroy it. He dismounted, and the place is shown you under the tree where he vowed himself to the work of destroying slavery. All Emancipation Proclamations were embryonic at the foot of that tree as Clarkson refused to be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

General Neal Dow one night at his home in Portland, Maine, was visited by a woman who besought him to help her bring her husband away from the saloon where he was drinking himself to death. General Dow went with her, and tried to remonstrate with the saloonkeeper, but he said he was legalized under the state laws, and that he would sell liquor as long as the man had any money. Neal Dow was a Quaker, and had fighting blood in him. For twelve years he sowed the state with temperance literature, and won the battle for God. All state prohibition laws, all local option laws, were embryonic that night when Neal Dow was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

Here is an old man looking back on his life, and telling his life story. The great apostle of Jesus Christ has stood his trial on a capital charge and has made his appeal to the supreme court. The representative of Rome is in difficulty because he has no tangible, definite charge against the prisoner. He seeks advice from King Agrippa, before whom Paul tells the story of his life; how he was "exceeding mad" against the men and women with whom now he is associated; how on the road to Damascus to persecute these people, a great light shone about him, and he heard a voice within his soul: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." To the day of his death, in spite of

persecution and physical torture, desertion, and humiliation, he never regretted that he had followed the heavenly vision. We speak quite lightly of the "thrice was I stoned and beaten with rods," without stopping to realize the mental humiliation and shame of it, and the excruciating physical pain.

He preached to the poor and the rich, the ignorant and the wise. They gloried in his preaching. He bore them grateful testimony that they had loved him. And he had to turn and ask them with a breaking heart: Am I become your enemy because I have told you the truth in rebuking you? He was disappointed in his countrymen, who opposed his universal gospel. He was disappointed in the members of the church, who dogged his footsteps, undermined his authority, controverted his apostleship. He was disappointed with his own preaching. He went to the University of Athens and he spoke with their method and in their spirit, addressing himself as a man of culture to men of culture, familiar with their own poets and philosophers; and they scoffed at him and said: This little Oriental is aping our learning and our ways, he is a picker-up of the crumbs of learning. And as he was making his way to the center of trade, to the Chicago of those ancient days, he vowed never again by words of human authority to try to clothe the simple message of the cross, but for himself, to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. And, so persecuted, disappointed, knowing the bitterness of great ideals thrown back upon himself, yet to the last moment he never regretted that he had been obedient to the heavenly vision.

That is the call for us today. A prophet and seer who has seen into the heart of things, sounded the same call. He tells the story of Merlin, who "followed the gleam," and all life was lit up by its beauty. And this gleam led him at last to the conception of an ideal, the conception of Arthur the blameless, standing for flawless humanity. And he sounds his call: "O young mariner, call your companions, launch your vessel, and ere it vanishes over the margin, follow it; follow the gleam."

What does he mean for you and me, and what is this heavenly vision? He means that he has taken life on the spiritual side, on its ideal and heroic side, and he calls to us to do the same. We should refuse to take life on its material side. There is a word in the letter to the Hebrews: "Laying aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us." The sin that doth beset us, the sin that is in the air, that clings about you, that penetrates to your inmost being. What is it? Materialism. To believe in material things, in material forces, to believe that a nation is going to be made great and kept by the number of its soldiers, or the miles of territory over which its flag is floating, to believe in money and money power, to believe in big battalions but not in the surrounding hosts of God. We are taught this by the life we live, in the rush and turmoil of our busy life, by the whirl and clash of life; we are taught it by our statesmen, by some preachers who ought to know better. It is to believe in things you can see and touch and handle. Do not believe in *things,* but in the *eternal.* Physical things are ephemeral. Believe in the invisible and indestructible. Believe in God, heaven, faith, hope, love. The things you can touch and see and handle are not real. It is God and heaven and life and love that are eternal, that are the realities of life. Believe in life on the ideal side, the heroic side, the spiritual side. Life will be for us all different. Humanity will be for us all different. Time and eternity, life and death, will become different for us. Then every man is supreme, solitary, divine, important. We thought he was only a piece in the machinery of things, but he is a macrocosm, a world in himself, a world of infinite possibilities. God loves him, Christ died for him; he is a human heart and a human soul to be saved, for whom Christ died. The powers that govern this universe put us here, and for a purpose. We are a part of the plan of God Almighty, part of his scheme of thought. You have been called upon to follow your loved ones to the valley of the shadow of death. But you saw Christ himself descending and triumphing over death,

bearing the triumph of immortality, and you knew death is only an act, a process, as birth, by which we pass into a fuller life. Humanity, life, death, are different to us as we rise to be obedient to the heavenly vision.

What is it that the poet meant when he bade us follow the gleam? To believe in moral causes, that God is on the side of moral forces and moral movements; never to believe that this world is governed by injustice. Believe that light is shown for the righteous. Believe with Carlyle that one strong thing there is here below—the right thing, the just thing. Believe with Paul that the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into liberty. Believe with John that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. Refuse to believe that this world is founded on anything but righteousness, and join in a moral movement. It is the advice of one of the purest souls that ever animated the world, one of your own poets, John Greenleaf Whittier: "Identify yourself actively with some righteous but unpopular cause." Take your place in the world's broad field of activities for the uplifting of mankind, for the serving of man, for the lifting of society into the kingdom of God. Be not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Look at problems through the eyes of Jesus. If you cannot get that high, sit at his feet and listen to his words. If Jesus Christ be man and only man, I will cleave to him always, of all mankind. If Jesus Christ be God and only God, I will follow him everywhere. Yield yourself to him, yield your heart and life to the will of him who rules the universe. Be not disobedient to the heavenly vision.—Preached at Chautauqua, and reported by the *Assembly Herald.*

FAITH AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

WILLIAM ARNOT.

Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck.—1 Tim. i: 19.

Christians in this country are at present [1874] more than usually happy and hopeful. Both the constituents of apostolic cheerfulness are present, "a wide door," and "many adversaries." So wide is the door, and so great the spiritual enlargement, that the "adversaries," instead of depressing, tend rather to stimulate and elevate the hearts of believers. The shout of a King is in the camp, and he is leading many captive.

As in ancient times, so now, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." "Justified by faith," is the key-note of the hymn that is now rising heavenward like the voice of many waters from a revived and united church. Christ the substitute—the just dying for the unjust—is the distinguishing feature of the preaching which at present is accompanied with power. This is as it should be; it is under this standard only that the Christian host will conquer. This gospel of free grace must be always and everywhere proclaimed. The evil spirit that possesses human hearts goeth not out by any other adjuration.

But while this should be done, there is another thing which ought not to be left

undone. A watchful, energetic effort personally to turn from all evil, and to practice all good, must be made by everyone who trusts in Christ for pardon and peace. Work *from* peace and pardon as energetically as if you were working *for* peace and pardon. There is not safety for an hour in any other attitude. If the upper side of true religion, pointing heavenward, be, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" the under side, pointing earthward, is, "To visit the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." If the upper side of the seal which binds a believer to the sure foundation bear the inscription, "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" the legend on the under side must be kept clear and legible by constant rubbing, "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. ii. 19). Actual holiness is as necessary to the life of faith as the left side of a man's body is to the life of the right.

In these circumstances I think I shall contribute a word for the times, if, for the special use of young converts, rejoicing in a free and full salvation, I set forth the two sides of the Christian life in their union and relations.

These I shall present as given by that great master of logical connections, the Apostle Paul.

"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. i. 19).

The two subjects here are *faith,* and *a good conscience.* We must inquire first, What they severally are, and next, How they are reciprocally connected. Their *nature* first, and then their *relations.*

I. *What they are.*

1. *Faith.*—The term is in the Scriptures applied both to the revealed truth which a disciple believes, and to his act in believing it. Faith is objective, or subjective. It is at one time the truth which you grasp, and at another time your grasp of the truth.

Both of these senses occur in the text, distinguished (in the original, though not in the English) by the presence or absence of the article. "Faith," in the first clause, is the soul's act of believing; "the faith," in the second clause, is the gospel which the soul believes.

Both in the Scriptures and in their own nature these two are closely interwoven together. It is impossible everywhere to preserve and mark the distinction between the light that I look on, and my looking on that light. True, my looking on it does not create the light, but it makes the light mine. Unless I look on it, the light is nothing to me. If I am blind, it is the same to me as if there had not been light.

In some such way are *faith* and *the faith* connected and combined. It is quite true that the gospel remains, although I should reject it: my unbelief cannot make God's promise of none effect. Yet my unbelief makes the gospel nothing to me—the same to me as if it had not been. *The* faith stands in heaven, although *faith* be wanting on earth; but if *faith* is wanting, *the* faith does not save the lost: as the sun continues his course through the sky although I were blind; but my blindness blots out the sun for me.

2. *A good conscience.*—It is not necessary to explain what conscience is: my readers know what it is better than I can tell. What is meant by conscience is a thing to be experienced rather than to be taught; but what is meant by a "good conscience" is not so obvious. Here the principal question is, Whether does the epithet "good" refer to the conscience that gives the testimony, or to the testimony that the conscience gives. The term "good" here belongs not to the testifier, but to the testimony.

In one sense that might be called a good conscience, that tells the truth even though the truth torment you. When the conscience, like an ambassador from God

in a man's breast, refuses to be silent in the presence of sin, and disturbs the pleasure of the guilty by uttering warnings of doom, that conscience is good, in the sense of being watchful and useful; but it is not the good conscience of this text, and of ordinary language. Both here, and in common conversation, a good conscience is a conscience that does not accuse and disturb. It is the same as peace of conscience. It is no doubt true that in an evil world, and through the deceitfulness of an evil heart, the conscience may sometimes be so drugged or seared that it may leave the soul undisturbed, although the soul is steeped in sin. It sometimes says "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked;" but the conscience sometimes contradicts God, and says that there is peace to the wicked. This is, however, an abnormal state of things; as when an ambassador at a foreign court turns traitor to the king who commissioned him, and refuses to deliver his lord's commands to the court where he has been accredited. Although this state of rebellion is in point of fact common among men, it is in its own nature a contradiction and an anomaly. Although it abounds in this fallen world, it is an exception and a rarity in the universal dominion of the supreme God. It may for our present purpose be set aside. The conscience in man is intended to be God's witness, and to speak to the man all the truth. Taking conscience, not as twisted and seared by sin, but as constituted by God in the conception and creation of humanity, then a good conscience is peace of conscience. You have and hold a good conscience when that present representative of God in your bosom does not charge you with sin. When it accuses it is an evil, when it approves it is a good, conscience. The one is an inward sense of guilt, the other an inward sense of righteousness.

By the light of Scripture we know that, as matters go among the fallen, a good conscience, if real and lawfully attained, implies these two things:—(1) The application of the blood of sprinkling for the pardon of sin; and (2) Actual abstinence from known sin in the life through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. A good conscience—if it is not a cheat—implies a righteousness *on* you and a righteousness *in* you. There is the washing away of guilt in the fountain open; and there is the actual turning from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. There is a righteousness which you get, and there is a righteousness which you perform. The one is the justification, and the other the sanctification, of a believer. The one is an act of God's free grace; the other is the work of God the Spirit. The one, as being an act, is completed when it is begun; the other, as being a work, drags its slow length along—alas, through corruptions within and temptations without—along the whole line of a disciple's life, until he escape from the body and depart to be with Christ. Pardon and renewing combine to constitute, under the gospel, a good conscience. What God hath joined, let not man put asunder. The first dissociated from the second is antinomianism; the second dissociated from the first is legalism. The hope of pardon through grace, without actual newness of life, tramples under foot God's holy law. The effort to lead a holy life, without looking for pardon through the blood of Christ, parades the filthy rags of a sinner's righteousness, as if they were fit to constitute the wedding garment of the King's guests when the King cometh in. The conscience is then really good when your trust is in the blood and righteousness of your Redeemer, and your life is practically dedicated to the Lord that bought you. The conscience is good when it truly testifies that God is at peace with you, and you are at peace with God. For all practical purposes, the good conscience here may be taken as synonymous with well-doing.

II. *Their relations.*—The text consists of two parts. The first is a command, the second is an example. The example, as is usual both in human teaching and divine, is adduced for the purpose of enforcing the precept. An illustrative case, taken from actual life to explain or apply a prescribed duty, may be in its form positive

or negative; that is, it may either directly show how good it is to obey, or how evil it is to transgress. The case which is employed in this text is negative. It exhibits, in concrete form, not the good that results from obedience, but the evil that results from transgression. Doubtless, Paul could have called up from his own experience many examples to show how good it is to hold both faith and a good conscience; but it suited his purpose better, in this instance, to adduce an example which shows the dread consequence of attempting to separate them. In point of fact, an example of these two rent asunder is more effective in proving the necessity of their union than a hundred examples in which the union remains intact. Thus, if proof were necessary, to divide a living child in two with Solomon's sword would constitute more vivid evidence that in a human being the left side is necessary to the life of the right, and the right to the life of the left, than the sight of a hundred unharmed children. When one side is wrenched off, the other side also dies: this is shorter and surer proof that the two are mutually necessary to each other's existence than a hundred examples of positive, perfect life.

Besides, it is easier to find a foundation for a negative than for a positive example. In buoying a channel, they cannot well set up a mark where the ship ought to go; they set up a beacon on the sunken rock which the ship ought to avoid.

On this principle, the apostle selects a negative rather than a positive example to enforce his point. A case in which death resulted from severance suits his purpose better than a case in which life is preserved through continued union. In this case, one of the related pair is severed, and the other, as a necessary consequence, perishes. Holding faith and a good conscience, which some—and he immediately names two men who had actually passed through the course which he describes—which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck; that is, when they put away the good conscience, the faith also was lost.

Here a question of the deepest interest crosses our path and claims our regard. Granted that faith and a good conscience are linked so intimately together that the one cannot live without its consort, what is the specific character of the relation? Whether of these two is first in nature as cause, and whether follows as effect? Looking to the form of expression in the text, which is exact and definite, we find that in the case adduced it was not the dissolution of faith that destroyed the good conscience, but the failing of the good conscience that destroyed faith. These men put away the good conscience; then and therefore, they lost the faith. What then? As the continued possession of the faith depended on maintaining the good conscience, is it through prior possession of a good conscience that one may attain faith?

No. The converse is the truth, fully and clearly taught in the Scriptures. You do not reach faith through a good conscience, but a good conscience through faith. A good conscience grows on faith, like fruit on a tree, not faith on a good conscience.

A good conscience in both its aspects, as already explained, is the fruit of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God, either by the righteousness of Christ in justifying, or the new obedience in sanctifying. God is pleased with both righteousnesses, each in its own place, and after its own kind. The righteousness which a believing man receives satisfies his justice, and the obedience which a converted man renders adorns his doctrine. God is well pleased, for his righteousness' sake, when he sees his Son accepted in your heart and his law honored in your life. But both of these are attained through faith. It is faith that justifies the man before God's judgment, and establishes the law in the life-course of the man.

Now this specific relation is not reciprocal. The good conscience does not produce faith, as faith produces a good conscience. What then? If faith goes first as the cause, and a good conscience follows as the fruit, the good conscience obviously cannot subsist without faith; but may faith subsist without a good conscience? No

As to production at first, the relation is not reciprocal; but as to maintenance it is. We cannot say, as a good conscience springs from faith, faith also springs from a good conscience; but we can say, as the want of faith makes a good conscience impossible, so, also, the loss of a good conscience is fatal to faith.

Some species of trees retain life in the roots although the head and stem are cut away. A young tree may spring from the old stump, and grow to maturity. But other species, such as the pine, will not thus spring a second time. When the mature tree is cut off, although the root, with a portion of the stem, is left, the tree does not revive. The root dies when the head is severed. The emigrant, in clearing his lot in the American forest, does not at first dig each tree out by the root. This process would occupy too much time. He cuts the tree four or five feet above the ground, and the root rots away in a few years. Hence, a common feature of the landscape in newly-reclaimed territories—fields studded all over with the stumps of trees, and the corn growing around them. Hence the coinage of a new word in the English as used in America. A candidate for office is said "to stump the state"—that is, he goes through it addressing meetings and soliciting votes. One of these stumps constitutes a convenient platform for the political orator. There is an interesting analogy between a pine tree and the pair which are joined in the text. It is not the tree's towering head that produces the root; the root produces the towering head. We can, therefore, safely say, If the root is killed, the head cannot live; but we may also say, If the head is severed, the root will die. Precisely such is the relation between faith and a good conscience. Faith is the producing, sustaining root, and a good conscience the stem that it sustains. Consequently, cut off faith, and a good conscience falls to the ground. Yes, this is the truth; but it is not the whole truth. We can also say, Destroy the good conscience, and faith cannot stand.

Thus in one way only may the good conscience be obtained; but in either of two ways both may be lost. Let faith fail, and the good conscience goes with it; let the good conscience be polluted, and the faith itself gives way.

In the first place, then, speculative error undermines practical righteousness. As belief of the truth purifies the heart and rectifies the conduct, so a false belief leads the life astray. Let it suffice to have enunciated the relation on this side; we shall turn for practical lessons chiefly to another aspect of the case. The example given in the text, and oftenest found in experience, is not false faith leading to an incorrect conduct, but impure conduct undermining faith. I suppose, in the experience of human life, if the speculative error producing practical wickedness slays its thousands, the practical wickedness perverting the creed slays its ten thousands.

The backsliding begins more frequently on the side of the conduct than on the side of opinion: the good conscience is lost in most cases, not by adopting a heretical creed, but by indulging in the pleasures of sin.

"A good conscience, which some having *put away*." When a man who has known the gospel and professed to be a disciple of Christ yields to temptation, and indulges in a course of sin—knowing the right, but doing the wrong—he forthwith loses the good conscience. His peace is disturbed; the witness in his bosom accuses him, and he is tormented by the fear of divine wrath. To this wicked man there is now no peace, and that by the word and decree of God. His heart is a house divided against itself, and it is wretched. Now, will this man who has fallen into sin, and so lost his good conscience, continue still sound in the faith? When his conduct is polluted will his opinion continue true?

No, verily. As in the case of the text, when the good conscience is thus forced out, the sound creed will soon follow. Having put away a good conscience, concerning the faith they have made shipwreck. It is true indeed that pure conduct depends on sound doctrine; but it is also true that sound doctrine depends on pure conduct.

And, in point of fact, it is much more common to find the faith perverted by loose practice, than practice perverted by a loose creed. The wicked one knows that a soul may be undone by a successful assault either on his faith or his practice. But in seeking whom he may devour, he finds the side of a holy life more easily reached and pierced than the side of orthodox views. Our enemy finds it easier to persuade us to do what is evil than to believe what is false. The conscience is more exposed in the battle of life than the intellect. And it is on the weak point that a skilful adversary will concentrate his attack.

For our instruction and reproof, the Spirit, by the apostle, adduces a case in which, while all the beliefs remained sound, the heart and life glided into impurity. In such a case there is strife in a man's own bosom. The doctrines of grace entertained in the mind wage war against the vices indulged in the life, and the vices indulged in the life wage war against the doctrines still retained in the mind. This battle cannot last very long. One or other combatant must give way. Either sound doctrine, maintaining its ground, will drive out the vile indulgence, or the vile indulgence, growing, like an appetite, by what it feeds on, will put to flight the faith.

In the case of our text the bad conscience prevailed and cast out the good belief. There is another case recorded in the same epistle—ch. vi. 9, 10. Here are some who erred from the faith. How came that? They first gave themselves over to covetousness; then and therefore they erred from the faith. In truth, a man cannot make both money and Christ his portion. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways; and in some turn of the way the unstable traveler will stumble and fall.

While the calamity is substantially in all cases the same, the faith may be shipwrecked in any of three distinct forms—a dead faith, an erroneous faith, and no faith. In the first a form of sound words remains, but they are a dead letter; in the second, false views of Christ and his work are entertained; and in the third, the backslider sits down in the chair of the scorner, and says, No God, with his lips as well as in his heart.

Among ourselves, perhaps a dead faith is the most common form of soul shipwreck. Through the indulgence of various vanities and lusts, although the name of Christ and the salvation which it brings remain as words, they are words of no meaning, no power. It is difficult to tear the stump right out of the ground at once. The same end is gained by leaving it standing dead; it will gradually rot away.

Faith and covetousness, faith and any impurity, cannot dwell together in the same breast. These cannot be in the same room with living faith. As well might you expect fire and water to agree. The cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word. What then? In order that faith in us should not be choked and die, we must crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts. Does this savor of legal teaching? See how Paul, the preacher of the Cross, acted in his own experience—Acts xxiv. 15, 16: "And have hope toward God...And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men." You have faith in Christ; well, this is the way to keep it—to keep it living. Let not one of us suppose that his faith will remain fresh and full without watching and striving, when we see that even Paul found it necessary to exercise himself every day to keep his conscience clean.

Young men are, in the present day, peculiarly exposed to the danger of speculative error or unbelief. They hear many arguments against either certain doctrines of the gospel, or the gospel itself; they must listen to many sneers against men who profess the faith. I do not deny that there is danger on that side. There is danger: a process of sapping and mining goes on, which may in time overthrow the faith of some. I confess there is danger of false opinions insinuating themselves into men's minds. All I contend for is, that the danger is greater on the other side. Faith is easier and oftener reached and undermined by stains that eat through the conscience.

I knew a young man once who became what was called a Socialist. He attained a great degree of boldness in the profession of ungodliness. No God, or no God that cares for me, was his short, cold creed. But I knew him and his communications before he had made shipwreck concerning faith. The second table of the law had, by indulgence of sinful pleasure, been rusted out of his heart before the first table was discarded from his creed. He had cruelly dishonored his father and his mother, before he learned to blaspheme God. It cannot be comfortable to a young man in his strength to come day by day to open his heart to God, if day by day he is deliberately disowning and dishonoring his parents in the weakness of their age. The dishonorer of his parents finds it necessary to his own comfort to cast off God. This man put away his good conscience, and therefore his faith was wrecked. The man ultimately recovered his faith. The stress of life was too heavy for an empty heart to bear; and he was fain to return, like the prodigal, to his Father.

I knew another, who had in youth made higher attainments, and who, on that account, made a more terrible fall. He had experienced religious impressions, and taken a side with the disciples of Christ. I lost sight of him for some years. When I met him again, I was surprised to find that he had neither modesty before men nor reverence before God. He was free and easy. He announced plainly that he did not now believe in the terrors spiritual that had frightened him in his youth. I made another discovery at the same time regarding him. He had deceived, ruined, and deserted one whom he falsely pretended to love. Through vile and cruel affections he had put his good conscience away; and, to pacify an evil conscience, he had denied the faith. The belief of the truth and the practice of wickedness could not dwell together in the same breast. The torment caused by their conflict could not be endured. He must be rid of one of the two. Unwilling to part with his sin at the command of his faith, he parted with his faith at the command of his sin.

But though the shipwreck of faith is often, it is not always, the issue of the struggle. When the conscience of one who tried to be Christ's disciple is defiled by admitted, indulged sin, the struggle inevitably, immediately begins. The Spirit striveth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit. The sin often casts out the faith; but the faith also often casts out the sin. The outcome is often, through grace, the discomfiture of the adversary. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory." "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."

David put away his good conscience. His conscience was deeply stained by great, grievous, deliberate sin. The sword of the Spirit, glancing from a prophet's lips, pierced through the searing, in the short and awful word, "Thou art the man." Then began the conflict to rage in his breast. This battle cannot last long. One or other combatant, in such a fast and furious struggle, must soon succumb. Angels desire to look into it. Here is a fight for the life of a soul! Now, or never! Either his faith will triumph over his sin, or his sin will triumph over his faith. These two cannot divide the kingdom and reign in concert. Repentance or Atheism will gain the day, and possess the man. It must either be the cry of Repentance, "I have sinned against the Lord;" or the cry of Atheism, "There is no Lord to sin against."

The struggle closed in the confession of the penitent; and the Lord also put away his sin.

NATURAL OR SPIRITUAL BIRTH?

JOHN BUNYAN.

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.—John i: 13.

The words have a dependence on what goes before, and therefore I must direct you to them for the right understanding of it. You have it thus: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh—but of God."

In the words before, you have two things. First, Some of his own rejecting him, when he offered himself to them. Second, Others of his own receiving him, and making him welcome; those that reject him, he also passes by; but those that receive him, he gives them power to become the sons of God.

Now, lest any one should look upon it as good luck or fortune, says he, they "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They that did not receive him, they were only born of flesh and blood; but those that receive him, they have God to their Father; they receive the doctrine of Christ with a vehement desire. To explain the text, First, I will show you what he means by blood. They that believe are born to it, as an heir is to an inheritance—they are born of God, not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; not of blood, that is, not by generation, not born to the kingdom of heaven by the flesh, not because I am the son of a godly man or woman—that is meant by blood; Acts xvii: 26: He "hath made of one blood all nations." But when he says here, "not of blood," he rejects all carnal privileges they did boast of: they boasted they were Abraham's seed; no, no, says he, it is not of blood; think not to say you have Abraham to your father; you must be born of God, if you go to the kingdom of heaven.

Second, "Nor of the will of the flesh." What must we understand by that?

It is taken for those vehement inclinations that are in man, to all manner of looseness, fulfilling the desires of the flesh: that must not be understood here; men are not made the children of God by fulfilling their lustful desires. It must be understood here in the best sense: there is not only in carnal men a will to be vile, but there is in them a will to be saved also; a will to go to heaven also. But this it will not do; it will not privilege a man in the things of the kingdom of God: natural desires after the things of another world, they are not an argument to prove a man shall go to heaven whenever he dies. I am not a freewiller, I do abhor it; yet there is not the wickedest man but he desires, some time or other, to be saved; he will read some time or other, or, it may be, pray, but this will not do: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." There is willing and running, and yet to no purpose (Rom. ix: 16). Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, have not obtained it (ver. 30). Here, I do not understand, as if the apostle had denied a virtuous course of life to be the way to heaven; but that a man without grace, though he have natural gifts, yet he shall not obtain

privilege to go to heaven, and be the son of God. Though a man without grace may have a will to be saved yet he cannot have that will God's way. Nature, it cannot know any thing but the things of nature—the things of God knows no man but by the Spirit of God; unless the Spirit of God be in you, it will leave you on this side the gates of heaven. "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It may be, some may have a will, a desire that Ishmael may be saved; know this, it will not save thy child. If it was our will, I would have you all go to heaven. How many are there in the world that pray for their children, and cry for them, and are ready to die [for them]? and this will not do. God's will is the rule of all; it is only through Jesus Christ: "which were born, not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now I come to the doctrine.

Men that believe in Jesus Christ, to the effectual receiving of Jesus Christ, they are born to it. He does not say they *shall* be born to it, but they *are* born to it—born of God unto God and the things of God, before he receives God to eternal salvation. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now, unless he be born of God, he cannot see it: suppose the kingdom of God be what it will, he cannot see it before he be begotten of God. Suppose it be the gospel, he cannot see it before he be brought into a state of regeneration. Believing is the consequence of the new birth; "not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God."

First, I will give you a clear description of it under one similitude or two. A child, before it be born into the world, is in the dark dungeon of its mother's womb: so a child of God, before he be born again, is in the dark dungeon of sin, sees nothing of the kingdom of God; therefore it is called a new birth: the same soul has love one way in its carnal condition, another way when it is born again.

Second, As it is compared to a birth, resembling a child in his mother's womb, so it is compared to a man being raised out of the grave; and to be born again, is to be raised out of the grave of sin; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." To be raised from the grave of sin is to be begotten and born; Rev. 1:5: there is a famous instance of Christ; he is "the first begotten of the dead"; he is the first-born from the dead, unto which our regeneration alludeth; that is, if you be born again by seeking those things that are above, then there is a similitude betwixt Christ's resurrection and the new birth; which was born, which was restored out of this dark world, and translated out of the kingdom of this dark world, into the kingdom of his dear Son, and made us live a new life—this is to be born again: and he that is delivered from the mother's womb, it is the help of the mother; so he that is born of God, it is by the Spirit of God. I must give you a few consequences of a new birth.

(1) First of all, A child, you know, is incident to cry as soon as it comes into the world; for if there be no noise, they say it is dead. You that are born of God, and Christians, if you be not criers, there is no spiritual life in you—if you be born of God, you are crying ones; as soon as he has raised you out of the dark dungeon of sin, you cannot but cry to God, What must I do to be saved? As soon as ever God had touched the jailer, he cries out, "Men and brethren, what must I do to be saved?" Oh! how many prayerless professors are there in London that never pray! Coffee-houses will not let you pray, trades will not let you pray, looking-glasses will not let you pray; but if you were born of God, you would.

(2) It is not only natural for a child to cry, but it must crave the breast; it cannot live without the breast—therefore Peter makes it the true trial of a new-born babe: the new-born babe desires the sincere milk of the Word, that he may grow thereby: if you be born of God, make it manifest by desiring the breast of God. Do you long for the milk of the promises? A man lives one way when he is in the

world, another way when he is brought unto Jesus Christ (Isa. lxvi). They shall suck and be satisfied; if you be born again, there is no satisfaction till you get the milk of God's Word into your souls (Isa. lxvi: 11). To "suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation." Oh! what is a promise to a carnal man? A whore-house, it may be, is more sweet to him; but if you be born again, you cannot live without the milk of God's Word. What is a woman's breast to a horse? But what is it to a child? there is its comfort night and day, there is its succor night and day. O how loath are they it should be taken from them: minding heavenly things, says a carnal man, is but vanity; but to a child of God, there is his comfort.

(3) A child that is newly born, if it have not other comforts to keep it warm than it had in its mother's womb, dies; it must have something got for its succor: so Christ had swaddling clothes prepared for him; so those that are born again, they must have some promise of Christ to keep them alive; those that are in a carnal state, they warm themselves with other things; but those that are born again, they cannot live without some promise of Christ to keep them alive; as he did to the poor infant in Ezek. xvi: 8. I covered thee with embroidered gold; and when women are with child, what fine things will they prepare for their child! Oh, but what fine things has Christ prepared to wrap all in that are born again! Oh what wrappings of gold has Christ prepared for all that are born again! Women will dress their children, that every one may see them how fine they are; so he in Ezek. xvi: 11: "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck; and I put a jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head." And, says he in ver. 13, "Thou didst prosper into a kingdom." This is to set out nothing in the world but the righteousness of Christ and the graces of the Spirit, without which a new-born babe cannot live, unless they have the golden righteousness of Christ.

(4) A child, when it is in its mother's lap, the mother takes great delight to have that which will be for its comfort; so it is with God's children, they shall be kept on his knee; Isa. lxvi: 11: "They shall suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation"; ver. 13: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." There is a similitude in these things that nobody knows of, but those that are born again.

(5) There is usually some similitude betwixt the father and the child. It may be the child looks like its father; so those that are born again, they have a new similitude—they have the image of Jesus Christ (Gal. iv). Every one that is born of God has something of the features of heaven upon him. Men love those children that are likest them most usually; so does God his children, therefore they are called the children of God; but others do not look like him, therefore they are called Sodomites. Christ describes children of the devil by their features—the children of the devil, his works they will do; all works of unrighteousness, they are the devil's works: if you are earthly, you have borne the image of the earthly; if heavenly, you have borne the image of the heavenly.

(6) When a man has a child, he trains him up to his own liking—they have learned the custom of their father's house; so are those that are born of God—they have learned the custom of the true church of God; there they learn to cry, "My Father" and "My God"; they are brought up in God's house, they learn the method and form of God's house, for regulating their lives in this world.

(7) Children, it is natural for them to depend upon their father for what they want; if they want a pair of shoes, they go and tell him; if they want bread, they go and tell him; so should the children of God do. Do you want spiritual bread? go tell God of it. Do you want strength of grace? ask it of God. Do you want strength against Satan's temptations? go and tell God of it. When the devil tempts you, run

home and tell your heavenly Father—go, pour out your complaints to God; this is natural to children; if any wrong them, they go and tell their father; so do those that are born of God, when they meet with temptations, go and tell God of them.

THE APPLICATION.

The first use is this, To make a strict inquiry whether you be born of God or not; examine by those things I laid down before, of a child of nature and a child of grace. Are you brought out of the dark dungeon of this world into Christ? Have you learned to cry, "My Father"? (Jer. iii:4.) "And I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father." All God's children are criers—cannot you be quiet without you have a bellyful of the milk of God's Word? cannot you be satisfied without you have peace with God? Pray you, consider it, and be serious with yourselves; if you have not these marks, you will fall short of the kingdom of God—you shall never have an interest there; "there" is no intruding. They will say, "Lord, Lord, open to us; and he will say, I know you not." No child of God, no heavenly inheritance. We sometimes give something to those that are not our children, but [we do] not [give them] our lands. O do not flatter yourselves with a portion among the sons, unless you live like sons. When we see a king's son play with a beggar, this is unbecoming; so if you be the king's children, live like the king's children; if you be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, and not on things below; when you come together, talk of what your Father promised you; you should all love your Father's will, and be content and pleased with the exercises you meet with in the world. If you are the children of God, live together lovingly; if the world quarrel with you, it is no matter; but it is sad if you quarrel together; if this be amongst you, it is a sign of ill-breeding; it is not according to the rules you have in the Word of God. Dost thou see a soul that has the image of God in him? Love him, love him; say, This man and I must go to heaven one day; serve one another, do good for one another; and if any wrong you, pray to God to right you, and love the brotherhood.

Lastly, if you be the children of God, learn that lesson—Gird up the loins of your mind, as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former conversation; but be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Consider that the holy God is your Father, and let this oblige you to live like the children of God, that you may look your Father in the face, with comfort, another day.

[This sermon, although very short, is peculiarly interesting: how it was preserved we are not told; but it bears strong marks of having been published from notes taken by one of the hearers. There is no proof that any memoranda or notes of this sermon were found in the autograph of the preacher. In the list of Bunyan's works published by Chas. Doe, at the end of the "Heavenly Footman," March 1690, it stands No. 44. He professes to give the title-page, word for word, as it was first printed. It is, "Mr. John Bunyan's last sermon, at London, preached at Mr. Gamman's meeting-house, near Whitechapel, August 19, 1688, upon John i:13: showing a resemblance between a natural and a spiritual birth; and how every man and woman may try themselves, and know whether they are born again or not." Published 1689, in about one sheet in 12mo. From this it appears to have been preached only two days before his fatal illness, and twelve days before his decease, which took place August 31, 1688. The disease which terminated his invaluable life, was brought on by a journey to Reading on horseback, undertaken with the benevolent design of reconciling an offended father to his son. Having accomplished his object, he rode to London; on his way home, through a heavy rain, the effects of which appeared soon after this, his last sermon was preached. He bore, with most exem-

plary patience and resignation, the fever which invaded his body; and, at a distance from his wife and family, in the house of his friend Mr. Strudwick, at Snow Hill, his pilgrimage was ended, and he fell asleep in perfect peace, to awake amidst the harmonies and glory of the celestial city.—Geo. Offor.]

THE LAW OF GROWTH

MALTBIE D. BABCOCK, D. D.

Law is God's or man's way of working. Visible growth means recognized law. Discoverers have stumbled upon laws of God by accident, where inventors have attained them by slow plodding. Evident growth, whether slow or sudden, means obedience to law.

In II Peter 3: 18, Peter says, "*But* grow." If Christians are not to be led away with the error of the wicked or fall from their own steadfastness, they must push forward. The way to avoid spiritual death is by spiritual growth. Nature says, "Grow, or I'll kill you." As soon as our bodies stop growing, God's law begins to work on them and disintegration takes the place of integration. Nature's fingers begin to pick and pick. We lose an atom here and an atom there. In the end the law of death claims all of us that is mortal.

How sad when this body stops growing too soon! You have heard Marshall Wilder and have laughed at his bright jokes on his shortness of stature, but you don't know how often at night he has wept bitterly and said, "My God, why has this to be?"

Still more sad it is when men stop growing spiritually. We are told that Terah set out with Abraham for Canaan. We are also told that Terah died in Haran. He died where he stopped. We see Terahs all around us dying at Haran.

The same thing is true of nations. We hear much of dying nations now. It is the penalty of immobilism. They are not growing. If there are no new shoots at the top of the tree, death has struck at the roots. Expansion is the imperial instinct of young life.

John, in his third Epistle, second verse, tells his beloved Gaius he wishes he might prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospers. What if we, our real selves, our characters, should have power to make the physical correspond to the spiritual! What dwarfs, cripples, monstrosities of arrested development would be seen! Friend, are you in society? Are you growing? Are *you* growing? "Well, I am quite a social lion—I have a calling list (————————) so long." Are you in politics? Are *you* growing? "Well, I never had such an influence as I have today." In business? Yes, and getting richer every year. But *you*. The essential man—are you growing? So shall the rich man *fade away* in his ways—the man die inside the money-maker *Thou* art weighed and found wanting.

I. WE CAN GROW.

The glory of growth is that we *can* grow. What joy like growth? In what are

we growing? Think of growths of a sandfort on the sea beach, a picture, a marble statue, a character! Which is best field for growth? All things have vital limit. Every life has the curve that marks its cycle. If we once begin to grow on a curve, we can measure the arc of our declension. Only that which is perfectly straight goes on and grows on forever. This great globe itself will fade away because it grew on a curve. Fasten to the straight line of life and character and usefulness and grow forever and forever; then death itself will be only a shadow falling across the line of life.

II. WE MUST GROW.

If we stop, instantly death begins. The moment you and I become satisfied with the situation that may be improved, that moment we are dying. Never make the best of anything that can be bettered. Turn *posse* into esse. Study the poem "Excelsior," one of the grandest poems ever written. You should be yourselves, plus your possibilities. We are not responsible for the disposition we are born with, but we are responsible for the disposition we die with. Do not throw responsibility on God. Remember that God was "the God of Jacob." God is your God as He was the God of Jacob. But He is not content with Jacob. God is honored when Jacob, the supplanter, changes his disposition and dies Israel, the prince of God. God requires interest and principal. Thou knowest He is a hard Master, reaping where He has not sown, therefore we *must* grow.

When I go to the graveyard, the graves say to me, we have had our day; now you have yours. Therefore I take what I am and go on to what I may become. I am responsible not merely for what I am, but for what I may be. Life equals nature, plus nurture. Here is a common sweet-brier rose; that is nature: here is the American Beauty rose; that is nurture.

III. HOW?

1. *Vitally.*—We cannot grow unless we are alive. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. I don't care about your environment, if you have not spiritual life in the Son you cannot grow.

2. *Naturally.*—Get in the line of growth. We hear much about environment and I believe in it. When I see an acorn lying on a stone, I know the acorn will not grow. Let me put the acorn in the ground and it is where it belongs. It will grow.

3. *By eating.*—The Digger Indians eat clay. They are small potatoes. What we eat mightily affects us. A sea gull one time was shut up and fed on grain. Its natural food is soft fish, and its natural stomach is soft. After a time this one was killed, and it was found the stomach had changed into a gizzard. If you can digest all you see in the daily newspaper you have degenerated. Your stomach has turned to a gizzard. Read what will upbuild. "Eat ye that which is good." No book can make you grow as the Bible can. Feed on it. It will build you up. It will edify you. It will do more. It will furnish your edifice. No scant furniture either, it will *thoroughly* furnish you to all good works.

4. *By breathing.*—We breathe over our breath in this room. If we should go outside and come in again we would say, "Did I breathe such air!" We die daily. Sometimes sextons save the bad air of the church for the next Sunday. This is a variety of funeral. Jesus was a man of prayer. Common atmosphere stifled Him. He could not long breathe it, hence His communion apart with the Father. Get deep breaths of heavenly air every day. You can get it on the street as well as in your quiet room.

4. *By resting.*—Even the heart rests between the heart-beats. The man who is growing needs rest. Anxiety will not add an inch to you or your work. It will subtract. Consider the lilies of the field how they *grow.* Read Phil. 4:6, 7; Ps. 37:7; Isa. 30:15. Underneath us are the everlasting arms. He giveth his beloved sleep.

5. *By working.*—Show me a man who does not work and I will show you a man who is pulp. If you work you will eat, rest and sleep. Do you know what is the trouble in our churches today? We find people complaining that they are not spiritually fed. The reason is because they are not spiritually hungry, and they are not hungry because they are not working. Oh, how our broken-down tissue calls for nourishment! So the soul tissue, broken down by toil for the Master, cries out for the Bread of Life. If any man will work in the vineyard he will grow.

Do you want to *G-r-o-w. Go right on working.* In this way you will find your straight line of life without variableness or shadow of turning. This is God's own lifeline. "My Father *worketh* hitherto and I work."

IN THE CLUTCHES OF TEMPTER.

LEN G. BROUGHTON.

Some months ago I had occasion to study the question of temptations. A splendid man, a member of my church, approached me on the subject and asked me some question that really puzzled me. I made up my mind to go into the subject as we find it in the Scriptures.

TEMPTATION IS UNIVERSAL.

There is not a soul that is not at times the subject of temptation. I have found but one man in my life who claimed he had gotten so religious that he was not tempted. He told me a falsehood. He was a friend of mine and I told him it was a straight-out falsehood. Not long after this we met and he recalled the conversation and said, "You told me the truth. I was simply swept off my feet by fanaticism." If you find one of this kind he is either a fanatic, a fool, or a liar.

Temptation is the common lot and universal experience of the believer. When the tempter comes to us if we haven't this fact fixed in our minds we will have discouragement and set-backs in our religious life and experience. It has not been long since a woman came to me and said: "I don't believe I am converted." I said, "Why?" "Because I have more temptations than I had before." And she was actually thinking of having her name taken off the church roll, because she had more temptations than formerly. "The devil had rather get you now than when he had you before," said I. "If he can get you now he will hurt the cause of Christ. When he had you before he would simply hurt you." As a church member you don't simply hurt yourself when you fall; you hurt the church of Jesus Christ.

The more I study the Scriptures the more I am convinced that religion is the most practical, common sense thing on earth. If we can get that fixed in our minds

it will help us more than anything in this world. When the Bible makes a promise, it is just like any other promise. Brother, just take God at His word, and do what God says, and you may rest assured God will do what He says. The devil tempts me more now than before I got religion. Will I go back where the devil won't bother me? Not much. I tell you temptation is common to believers.

JESUS WAS TEMPTED.

It was true of Jesus Christ who knew no sin. We shall see a difference between sin and temptation. Sin and temptation are separate and distinct. Jesus was a man of temptation. And Jesus Christ becomes our pattern as well as our Savior. If Jesus knew temptation as an experience, how much more shall we who are shapen in sin expect to have to deal with the devil.

I want to read the temptation of Jesus: "And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

HOW JESUS WHIPPED THE DEVIL.

Jesus whips the devil through quoting scripture. Now, friends, there is something in that. If Jesus Christ had to rely on the word of God to conquer the devil, how much more do we need to rely on God's word. It is a sad fact that you do not know the word of God. And how can you hope to know the word of God if you are too lazy to study it? That is why we have our Bible Institute—that we may study to serve and study to live. I tell you we will never learn how to live a victorious life until we know God's word. Now, brethren, I want you to follow me in this matter of temptation. After having studied the temptation of Jesus you are acquainted with the wiles of the devil in seeking to overcome a Christian. This temptation came just after his baptism. My brother, it does seem to me that the devil invariably adopts this method of disouraging a Christian.

Last year at the close of our Bible Conference a splendid Christian, one who had gotten a great blessing out of the Conference, and one who I believe received the Holy Ghost, came to me and said: "I have had more trouble since that Conference closed than I had before. I have had a harder fight with sin than I ever had before. I thought when I was filled with the Holy Ghost I would not have any trouble living a holy life."

Now, let us go back to the experience of Jesus. There was one who was filled with the Holy Ghost, and immediately after the Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus and the voice said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," the devil took him and carried him into the mountain and tempted him as he was never

tempted before. Remember this, with every spiritual ecstasy there comes a corresponding temptation. As we mount higher and higher in Christian life so the devil mounts higher and higher. We preachers call it the reaction. Reaction is nothing but devil-action. We go through a meeting and get a hundred people into the church. Everybody is on the mountain peak, basking in the sunlight of God. After the meeting is over we wonder what has become of the folks. Why, you say, that is just the natural consequence, it is just the reaction. Whenever we have a spiritual ecstasy, then the devil comes to pull down and destroy that which we have built up. Now, if we understand this part of the scheme of the devil, and instead of going off and consulting men and books, consult the word of God, and rely on its promises, we will avoid much of the discouragement that accompanies Christian work.

STRIKING THE WEAK POINT.

The devil struck Christ at the point of hunger; just at the end of fasting a period of forty days and forty nights. The devil comes upon the scene. "If you will do this and that and the other you will get something to eat."

The lesson for us to get from this is, that the devil always knows your weak spot and always knows when the time comes to strike that spot, and he never strikes amiss. The devil comes to some men at some time in life, perhaps to all of us, with a temptation along the line of our appetites. He struck Jesus because he was hungry. He struck you along the line of strong drink. He struck you along the line of tobacco. He struck you over a big Sunday dinner. I have fought on that line, and sometimes I have had to fight some of my best friends. You don't like it because I don't go and eat your big dinners on Sunday.

The devil never comes at a man at the point where he is strongest. The devil never comes and tempts me to curse. I am never tempted to curse. I never cursed an oath in my life. The devil never comes to me and tells me to steal. But he comes and tempts me along lines of my weakness. No man ever fell yet because of his strength, but because of his weakness. I don't believe a man ever fell that was not weak at some other point.

When the devil found he could not tempt the Lord Jesus through his appetite be came to him through his faith. "If you will climb up on that pinnacle and jump off. You just do that. You know it is written (the devil quotes scripture, too. He knows more than a great many church people): 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they will bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' You jump from that pinnacle; you won't get hurt, if you are the Son of God."

The meaning of what the devil said was simply this: You do a fool thing and God will take you up. Now, let me tell you something: You go and do a fool thing and God will let you be a fool. I am reminded of the old saying, I used to think was in the Bible: "The Lord tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." There never was a bigger lie. If you want to try it, put a shorn sheep out and one not shorn, some cold winter night, and see what happens. The shorn sheep will be dead in the morning. Thank God! He does take us up when we are in the line of duty. And when you have a "thus saith the Lord" back of you, my brother, you can do anything. But you dare not tempt God. There is a man with a large blood vessel vein cut. There stands by him a surgeon, who is ready to apply his instruments and stop the flow of blood. The fellow says, "Don't you touch it." The devil has him on the pinnacle. He is going to jump off, and let the Lord take care of him. He will bleed himself to death, and he ought to. You have no right today to do a foolish thing and expect God to come and take you up. I tell you, as I have studied

this subject of temptation there has come to me much new truth. You go up to that pinnacle and jump off and you shall not get hurt. Why? Because "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee." If he had said to the Master, go out and undertake some seemingly impossible enterprise to the glory of God, he would have done it. You come to God and ask Him, Lord God grant this thing that I may glorify thy name. I am just going to trust in the divine power. I believe God will take care of you. Brother, don't do a foolish thing in the name of Christianity.

THE VITAL SPOT OF PRIDE.

Now, seeing he can't break down his faith, he strikes him at the point of pride. If you will just come up here on the mountain and worship me, I will give you the whole world. Now, brethren, if he can't get you at appetite, or faith, he will get you at this vital spot of pride. Oh, my God, how many men that are not rich that are yielding to the temptation of wealth! How many people today are worshiping the money that they have not got and never will have. Jesus said: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." God's glory and his work shall be first in your life.

Then you see the devil's temptation again in the life of the Apostle Paul. The devil tempted him in the line of his work. He was tempted at a time when you would have thought the devil would have been out of the race.

Now, if Jesus and Paul, the two mightiest characters in the history of our faith, if they had to meet and conquer temptation, what do you think of us? "Well," some people say, "Jesus was the Son of God, and it was not hard for Him to resist temptation." In this case of Jesus and the devil, I believe Jesus met and conquered him as a man. The fight holds up to us the hope of a victorious life through the Holy Ghost. There is no excuse for this parleying today with sin on the ground that we are not able to conquer the devil.

Temptation when properly considered and met is a means of grace. The Apostle James in 1:2 declares: "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." And then in the 12th verse: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." No man can ever grow in grace who does not face the tempter. How can I tell today whether I am stronger than I was last year? Last year's temptations still haunt me, but I am stronger to meet them. It is only as we meet the tempter and conquer that we can hope to claim victory.

WHEN IS TEMPTATION SIN?

If temptation is common, if temptation is also a means of growth, when does temptation become sin? Jas. 1:13-15—"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin." Then the temptation when it hath conceived beareth sin. It is not when the thing is fulfilled, for it may not be fulfilled; it is when it is conceived in the heart.

"I cannot help the birds flying over my head, but I can stop them from building nests in my hair." Let us take this illustration: The devil comes to me and says, "You go down here to the back door of the Neal Loan and Banking Company, the cashier failed to lock the door, and so and so is the combination to the box, and you can help yourself to the money." I need money. "Devil, are you sure nobody will ever know anything about it?" "Good scheme as you ever saw," he says. I say,

"All right, I will do it." I start to get the money. The devil meets me again and says, "The fellow found out he left the door unlocked and has gone back and locked it as tight as wax." "Much obliged, devil, you kept me from sinning." Why, my brother, in my heart I committed the sin when I agreed with the devil to do the thing. The failure to get there didn't change it at all. Whenever you decide you will carry out a wrong act, provided everything works out properly, then and there you do it before God. The devil comes and tempts you to tell a lie on that man there, and he will do thus and so, and nobody will ever know it is a lie, because it looks so much like the truth. You can't help that. But don't yield to it.

THE WAY OF ESCAPE.

Look up and ask God for a way to escape. The way will come if we will let God have his way. I Cor. 10:13—"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, but will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." If you look up to God you can live a victorious life over every known sin. What a world we would have if we would all do it! Oh, my brother, hear me today, "He is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." There is no reason why every child of God may not live a life of victory.

"Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin."

Here is a man in prison. He is told to look to the jailer who has provided a way of escape. He looks and is delivered. So does God offer to us. When we are in the hands of the tempter just look up. He provides the way if we will only take it.

WHAT IT IS TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, D. D.

Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.—Act xxvi: 19.

I like these noble words, because they are truly triumphant words. They are the words of one who is looking back and remembering the brightest point of all his life, in which his life not only took a new departure, but began to move in a different direction, and became verily a new life. They are the words which give at once a jubilant and triumphant tone to the whole Christian life. It seems to me, if there is anything we want to guard against in the beginning of our Christian life, it is the tone which so many Christian lives have everywhere, and which it seems as if Christian lives were so continually tending to, of something which is low and painful and almost apologetic. They go around through the world complaining; and they go about through the world lamenting; and they go about through the world almost apologizing to other people for being Christians. I think we live in the midst of a pretty low-toned and feeble and sickly Christianity, and it is something good that there should come the ringing voice of the apostle Paul, who says, in words that fitly fill his heart with joy and make him stand with complete, undaunted courage before those who are listening to him: "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." And as he told the story, there rose before him the vision which had been the turning-point of his life. He remembered how he was going from Jerusalem to Damascus, and how on the way there had been manifest to him a sight which changed all his life—from the point of which his life became new; a changing point in which some new inspiration came to him, in which he has been living ever since.

How constantly we are seeing something of this kind! Everything a man does that is really worth the doing comes to him in the first place in some kind of vision. The vision comes before the action, if the man's action is worth anything. A man who does his work before he sees what that work is to be, does not do his best. You remember, when you look back over your lives, some vision that has come to you at some point of your life, and changed your life. Take some lower vision. There comes to a man an idea of the grandeur and greatness of being wealthy, and from that time on his life is changed. He follows a different impulse, and becomes independent of many of the things he has been seeking before. Or there comes before a man a much higher ambition. He wants to enter into the knowledge with which God has stocked his world, to understand the mysteries of this great world in which we are living. When a man has seen that vision, how immediately he becomes independent of all the lower standards by which he is surrounded, and going forward, simply asks that he may understand the truth! And then the man has a vision, how great it would be to win the applause of his fellow-men! and from that time his ears are unsatisfied till he hears men praising him. Another man has a vision of responsibility. There comes to him a great idea that he is in this world not

merely to do his own will, but some will that is greater than his own, and from that time on he lives a deeper, stronger life, because of the great thought that he is responsible to God. Now, when a man needs new courage to stimulate him, he looks upon the vision that first stimulated him. As we look back on our lives, we can all see there are a great many visions that have been shown to us—prophecies of what we might become; and the difference between men in this world, more than in anything else, is not in the visions God has given them, but is in the way they are obedient or disobedient to them. Now, St. Paul simply found himself in the midst of this universal law, when from the time he saw the vision and was obedient to it, his whole life was changed; and something like it shall come into our lives, and we shall be able to go forward in the course he pursued so nobly, if we are obedient to the vision we have.

Let us ask ourselves what was the vision that was shown to St. Paul. He is on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus. The heavens opened over him, and a voice came down; and, humbled in the dust, he hears the voice of his Master. Then he knew that Jesus Christ was the only true Master, and that in the service of that Master would come that which was best for him in the world; that his life before had been a failure because it had been against the true Master of his life; and that just as soon as he fastened himself to Jesus Christ as his Master, he would enter upon that course which should bring forth all his powers and make him the man that God intended him to be. It seems to me we cannot too clearly see the genius of the Christian life as it is given to us there in the vision that was shown to St. Paul. It was not merely that he was a sinner, that he had certain duties he had been neglecting; but it was that there was one great secret of power which he might obtain by putting himself in constant personal connection with his Master.

It seems to me there is something in the very simplicity of the text. When he recognized the vision he says he became obedient to it. My dear friends, that is the truth I want to take to myself, and have you take to yourselves to-night: the truth that the government of this world is all by obedience; that it depends upon what a man obeys; what a man is. The personal obedience is the Christian life; the personal salvation to one who has done for us that which has not merely won the right to demand of us that we should obey him, but has also shown us what he has done, how worthy he is of exacting our obedience. The vision, then, of the Christian life, it seems to me, that thing upon which the Christian fastens his eye and which he follows, and which leads him on through all the rich and beautiful ranges of Christian growth, the vision that first moves him, is Christ, his Master, and his own life completely obedient to Christ. We ask ourselves again the question. What is it to be a Christian? We ask ourselves again the question, How shall I become a Christian? It is simply the new life that comes to a man when he has put himself in personal obedience to the Master, and in obedience to that Master there opens before him all the richness of the new life, and in this obedience man watches the character of him whom he is obeying. There is no power in this world like friendship. There is nothing as you look upon your life that has shaped you, made you what you are to-night, so completely as the friendships in which you have been living from your boyhood up. Now, Christianity seems to be simply the perfection of this power of friendship. It seems to be simply the speaking of the sky so that we can see that, above every other friendship, above everything that shapes our lives, there is the power of God made manifest in Jesus Christ, so that he who passes his life in utter and entire obedience to that of the great Master enters into the character of that Master more and more.

Look at the old saint whose Christian life is almost over, whose beautiful days are drawing to their beautiful close, who just remembers the far-back time when

he first became a disciple of the Master. What has made him what he is? I try to analyze it, and, when I get at the secret of it, it is that there has been a heavenly vision made manifest to him. It became known to him that there was one who, being his Master by the very right of his birth, had asserted his mastership by the love he had shown him and by the death he had died for him; and, as gradually his years slipped by, his life had been shaping itself upon the life of that great Master, till now he says, in the words that old Paul used, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," the perfection of his life as it has been shaped by obedience upon the life of his Master. It seems to me it is more and more necessary that we should bring ourselves to an absolutely simple conception of what Christianity is. The Christian experience is not merely something that comes into a man's life when he becomes conscious of his sins; it is not merely a new series of duties he enters upon, it is coming into friendship with that great, noble person in whom God is manifest to us; the giving of our lives so thoroughly to him that we become like him; our natures shaped upon his nature, till our life is his life and his life is our life. That is what it is to be a Christian. O Christians, remember this at the very beginning of your Christian life! Christianity and Christian experience is not the repenting of sin; it is not the doing of new duty; but it is the bringing of our life into conformity with the life in which God is manifest to us—the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. I climb a hill upon its darkened side. There is no sun that lights me, but I know upon the other side there is light; and as I go I stumble over ugly roots that trip me up. The dark shades are around me, and I go stumbling on. That is not the real purpose of my climbing the mountain. The obstacles are the incidents. But now I am at the top! There billows the sun before me, and I am illumined by his glory. Now, that is just the way with the Christians. It is not the experience of sin; it is not the conviction and wretchedness of sin that is the object of their Christian life. The soul humbled under its sins has only just reached the threshold of the new Christian experience. I beg you to understand this, my dear friends. I beg you to understand it, because this is what gives this glorious and triumphant tone to Christian experience. It is the recognition of the life of Jesus Christ as the pattern of the life into which we have to be shaped by our continued obedience to him.

But some one says: "Where is the place, then, of repentance of sin? Where is the place of the duty that the Christian is to do?" Repentance of sin is simply the natural, inevitable consequence, when my life meets the perfect life; when I come into the presence of Jesus Christ, then every wickedness of my life shows up against his glory, and it is the shame in which I am thrown by meeting him that makes me cast my sins indignantly away. "But where comes in the duty of the new life?" Ah! It is not that we may be brought to Christ that we do our duty, but that is simply the duty that we do, the song triumphant and the thankfulness with which we assure ourselves that we have, indeed, made him our Master. There is some poor drunken fellow in our city—what makes that man a Christian? What makes the difference that has come over so many souls in our city the last few weeks? It is that they repented of their sins? That must come first, but it came in fact when sitting here or in their own room, for he meets them everywhere, the Savior came into their presence. When they heard the voice of their Master, when they thought how he had himself suffered to the very death for them; then they became ashamed that they, men worthy of such a Master and of such a sacrifice, should go on in the low drunkenness in which they had been living; their sins became in their sight abominable things, and they cast them away.

There is one great idea, one very rich and beautiful idea, that lies at the very bottom of the whole Christian thought, and that is, the rescuing a soul and bringing

it to Christ is simply bringing it back into a life in which it naturally belongs and out of which it has wandered. It is not an unnatural thing, a man becoming a Christian. Oh, if we would only understand that it is a most natural thing, that vision of the kingdom of God! As natural as the coming back of the poor prodigal out of the wretchedness in which he had been living, to his father's house, where he belonged; as natural as the coming back of this poor bleating sheep borne by the shepherd back to the fold out of which it had wandered. The Savior's teaching is that man belongs to God, and that the coming to God is the coming back to God from whom we have departed. The coming of Jesus and his rescue of our nature always seems to me to be like this: There are people who, having been born in a land of richness and of culture, full of all good and holiness, have been taken away in their childhood, or have wandered by some act of their own, and have gone off and lived in exile on a savage island, where there is nothing that is beautiful or pure. They have been growing up in the midst of vileness and sin. By and by, on that island where they are living, they see a ship coming to them. It draws nearer and nearer across the waters. They begin to wonder what it is, and by and by a boat drops over its side and some one lands, a new form and yet an old form among them, and lives in their midst. When he comes it is all strange to them, but by and by he reminds them of things they had forgotten. There come into their hearts memories of that which had seemed entirely to have passed away. He came from the home in which they were born, and where their true place is, and he has come to remind them of their heritage. And by and by, as he lives there for them, and suffers there with them, there springs up in their hearts a memory of that old land from which he came. They recognize him as one with whom they have to do, and after awhile they are touched at the remembrance, and they say: "Oh, deliver us from this bondage!" And then he takes them by their hands and leads them back again; once more crosses the sea, and, landing on the shore from which he came, they find places waiting for them there. Oh, my friends, those of you who are Christians, don't you know what it all means? Don't you know how as little by little your sins were cast away, and you began to live another life; as little by little new holiness, of which you never dreamed as possible for you, opened before you, and you entered into it, how a strange naturalness was in all? It was all new; but yet it was not new. There was something that reminded you of some association there had been before. And your Savior, how was it with him? When you first heard of him, when he first stood out before you, as if you saw him verily with your eyes, and you heard his word, and as you bowed in prayer and hid your eyes from everything besides, when Jesus Christ stood before you, you seemed to see something strange that you had never met in your life before; but little by little, as he touched the deeper powers of your nature, you had a new conviction—*My* Savior! *my* Savior!

I tell you, my friends, I should have no hopes for the conversion of mankind, certainly not for the large conversion of the world, if it were not God's world from the beginning. If a man says to me: "I have no God; I have no God. I am my own God. The world around me is my God"; then I know if the Savior could be set before that impious man, there would be something in his heart that would recognize God, and the Savior who is his brother by the very fact of his being a child of God. And if he could see him as he is, he would say: "Take me back to my Father! Take me back to my Father whom I have forgotten, but whom you have shown me. The way has been made clear by that mysterious work by which you have come and given yourself into my life and borne its wretchedness and its sin for me." That is Christ giving a vision to the soul. He is before you now; right in your presence; looking at you; and Christ not only to whom you may come and begin a new life

but to whom you may give yourselves with the old life for which you are made. For the old life is the new life in this great world, and the children of God have wandered from him, but are his children still, and to whom the Son of God has come to tell them of their Father.

Here seems to me, too, is the power, the deep, deep power of the life a Christian lives after he has become a Christian; this idea of a new power, a new force in his soul. I think a great many stop when they are talking and thinking about seeing Christians, wondering what their new life shall be. "You tell me it is all new. You say I am to be something different from what I have been. You say the old life is to be left behind me, and I go on an entire new course. What am I to do with myself when I am a Christian?" That, it seems to me, is answered, if we can conceive of this great fact of Christian life.

But it is but the living of the life which God has made clear to us through the manifestation of Christ, and to which it is really a restoration. What does the child say when he comes back into his father's house after he has been living in his wretchedness and sins? The very things that fill his father's house spring up to meet him, and he finds everything is made for him; and so when a man who has become a Christian looks around upon the world and says, "I don't know what I am going to do," the work of his Father comes to him and he will catch something of the spirit, something of the work of the great Son of God. I am amazed when I see how instantly the young Christian catches his new work, and goes about doing the tasks of Jesus as if he had been doing them all his life. They are natural to him. And then a great deal of your life when you are a Christian will go on in doing the same things you have been doing. You will buy and sell, you will meet your friends upon the street, you will sit around your family board, you will talk about the news of the day, and it will seem all like the old thing, and yet like such a new thing. Can you not bear me witness, many of you, how life has been transfigured, all duty has been changed? What deep things we are doing all the time and doing them so triflingly, and making them so shallow and superficial. We are dealing with our friends in what we call friendship. True friendship is infinite, and we are making a light thing of it. We are dealing with our families. Family love is the deepest and most sacred thing on earth.

Does the heavenly vision come to everybody? Does everybody have shown to him by Christ that he belongs to God, and that there is a high life for him if he will be God's child and servant? Yes, it does come to everybody. Christ is absolutely the universal light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world. Don't dare to dream that you are somehow an exception, and that the Divine life has never been shown to you; that Christ has never been made manifest unto you; that you are doing what you might be doing; that you are what you might be. I should not know how to believe in Christ for myself if I didn't believe in Christ for every man and woman in this world. If there was one for whom he had not died, I should not dare to think that I was not that one.

Just one word more. See how this simplifies the Christian life: "I was not disobedient," I was "obedient, to the heavenly vision." I did what was made manifest to me that I ought to do. Obedience, just the doing of that which is shown to us as our duty, is all that Christ asks of us, and is the saving of the soul. The saving of the soul? No; the soul was saved when Christ came and saved it. It is the doing of the vision that he has laid out open before us when he simply says: "Obey and live. Do the thing you know you ought to do." Now, is not there something you ought to do to-night? Is not there some vision you are not obeying? Is not there some manifestation of the Savior you are not receiving? If you can stop and be obedient to the heavenly vision he is giving you now to himself, glory will brighten

as the daylight grows, till the noontime shall come at last. There came by and by another vision to Paul. There came a time when, lifted out of the world in a way that so amazed himself that he could not know whether it was really he or not, he saw unspeakable things and heard unspeakable words. Would the latter vision ever have come to him if he had not willingly obeyed the first vision that was shown to him? It was because he stretched out his hands upon the road to Damascus and said, "Lord, what shall I do?" that by and by he saw sights that he could not tell to mortal man. That is the way. Obedience sets the seal upon a revelation that the Master gives us, and then upon that sealed revelation some new light shall come, which a new obedience shall seal. So, every obedience new light, and every light new obedience, as if they were the maintaining stairways which led up to heaven to the throne of God, the soul goes on till it is made perfect in the image of him who came to seek you when you were all wretchedness and sin. This is the glory of the Christian life. Light up your eyes, Christians! Let not men think that to be a Christian is to be a weak and crushed and broken thing! Let them see that the Christian life is the glory of all life, for no man is a man till he is Christ's. Lift up your heart, O poor discouraged sinner, fascinated by your sin, yet holding it, come unto him who has conquered your sin, as he has brought you into the light of his glory, and fastening yourselves to him let him draw you away from your sin, with that sweet compulsion of tried obedience which transforms you gradually but certainly into likeness with himself. That is the Christian faith; that is the Christian progress; that is the Christian glory, because only he who is disobedient to no heavenly vision, at last has the other vision of the golden streets, and the river of water of life with the tree of life beside it, which is always filled with fruitage, always rich in growth to the glory of the Lord. Now let us pray for that.

CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED.

RICHARD BAXTER.

It is the promise of God, that the wicked shall live, if they will but turn, unfeignedly and thoroughly turn.

The Lord here professes that this is what he takes pleasure in, that the wicked turn and live. Heaven is made as sure to the converted, as hell is to the unconverted. Turn and live, is as certain a truth as, Turn or die. God was not bound to provide us a Savior, nor open to us a door of hope, nor call us to repent and turn, when once we had cast ourselves away by sin. But he has freely done it to magnify his mercy. Sinners, there are none of you who shall have cause to say I preach desperation to you. Do we use to shut the door of mercy against you? O that you would not shut it up against yourselves! Do we use to tell you that God will have no mercy on you, though you turn and be sanctified? When did you ever hear a preacher say such a word? You that cavil at the preachers of the Gospel, for desiring to keep you out of hell, and say that they preach desperation; tell me, if you can, when did you ever hear any sober man say, that there is no hope for you, though you repent and be converted? No, it is the direct contrary that we daily proclaim from the Lord; and whoever is born again, and by faith and repentance becomes a new creature, shall certainly be saved, and so far are we from persuading you to despair of this, that we persuade you not to make any doubt of it. It is life, not death, that is the first part of our message to you; our commission is to offer salvation; certain salvation; a speedy, glorious, everlasting salvation, to every one of you; to the poorest beggar as well as the greatest lord; to the worst of you, even to drunkards, swearers, worldlings, thieves, yea, to the despisers and reproachers of the holy way of salvation. We are commanded by the Lord our Master, to offer you a pardon for all that is past, if you will but now at last return and live; we are commanded to beseech and entreat you to accept the offer, and return; to tell you what preparation is made by Christ; what mercy stays for you; what patience waits for you; what thoughts of kindness God has towards you; and how happy, how certainly and unspeakably happy you may be if you will. We have indeed also a message of wrath and death, yea, of a twofold wrath and death; but neither of them is our principal message. We must tell you of the wrath that is on you already, and the death that you are born under, for the breach of the law of works; but this is but to show you the need of mercy, and to provoke you to esteem the grace of the Redeemer. And we tell you nothing but the truth, which you must know; for who will seek for physic that knows not that he is sick? Our telling you of your misery, is not that which makes you miserable, but drives you out to seek for mercy. It is you that have brought this death upon yourselves. We tell you also of another death, even remediless, and much greater torment, that will fall on those that will not be converted. But as this is true, and must be told you, so it is but the last and saddest part of our message. We are first to offer you mercy, if you will turn; and it is only those that will not turn, nor hear the voice of mercy, to whom we must foretell damnation. Will you but cast away your trans-

gressions, delay no longer, but come away at the call of Christ, and be converted, and become new creatures, and we have not a word of damning wrath or death to speak against you. I do here, in the name of the Lord of life, proclaim to you all that hear me this day, to the worst of you, to the greatest, to the oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation, if you will but turn. There is mercy in God, there is sufficiency in the satisfaction of Christ, the promise is free and full, and universal; you may have life, if you will but turn. But then, as you love your souls, remember what turning it is that the Scripture speaks of. It is not to mend the old house, but to pull down all, and build anew on Christ, the rock, and sure foundation. It is not to mend somewhat in a carnal course of life, but to mortify the flesh, and live after the Spirit. It is not to serve the flesh and the world, in a more reformed way, without any scandalous disgraceful sins, and with a certain kind of religiousness; but it is to change your master, and your works, and end; and to set your face the contrary way, and do all for the life that you never saw, and dedicate yourselves and all you have to God. This is the change that must be made, if you will live.

Yourselves are witnesses now, that it is salvation, and not damnation, that is the great doctrine I preach to you, and the first part of my message to you. Accept of this, and we shall go no further with you; for we would not so much as affright, or trouble you with the name of damnation, without necessity.

But if you will not be saved, there is no remedy, but damnation must take place; for there is no middle place between the two; you must have either life or death.

And we are not only to offer you life, but to show you the grounds on which we do it, and call you to believe that God means indeed, as he speaks; that the promise is true, and extended conditionally to you, as well as others; and that heaven is no fancy; but a true felicity.

If you ask, Where is your commission for this offer? Among a hundred texts of Scripture, I will show it to you in these few:

First, you see it here in my text, and the following verses, and in the 18th of Ezekiel, as plain as can be spoken; and in 2 Cor. v. 17-21, you have the very sum of our commission; "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." So Mark xvi. 15, 16. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, (that is with such converting faith as is expressed) and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." And Luke xxiv. 46, 47. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance (which is conversion) and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." And Acts v. 30, 31. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree: him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin." And Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." And lest you think this offer is restrained to the Jews, see Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." And Luke xiv. 17. "Come, for all things are now ready."

You see by this time that we are commanded to offer life to you all, and to tell you from God, that if you will turn, you may live.

Here you may safely trust your souls; for the love of God is the fountain of this offer, (John iii. 16,) and the blood of the son of God has purchased it; the faithfulness and truth of God are engaged to make the promise good; miracles oft sealed the truth of it; preachers are sent through the world to proclaim it; the sacraments are instituted and used for the solemn delivery of the mercy offered to them that will accept it; and the Spirit opens the heart to entertain it, and is itself the earnest of the full possession. So that the truth of it is past controversy, that the worst of you all, and every one of you, if you will but be converted, may be saved.

Indeed, if you will needs believe that you shall be saved without conversion, then you believe a falsehood; and if I should preach that to you, I should preach a lie. This were not to believe God, but the devil and your own deceitful hearts. God has his promise of life, and the devil has his promise of life. God's promise is, Return and live. The devil's promise is, You shall live whether you turn or not. The words of God are, as I have showed you, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Matt. xviii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 3, 5. "Without holiness none shall see God." Heb. xii. 14. The devil's word, "You may be saved without being born again and converted; you may do well enough without being holy. God does but frighten you; he is more merciful than to do as he says, he will be better to you than his word." And, alas, the greatest part of the world believe this word of the devil, before the word of God; just as our sin and misery came into the world. God said to our first parents, "If ye eat ye shall die;" and the devil contradicted him, and said, "Ye shall not die:" and the woman believed the devil before God. So now the Lord says, Turn or die: and the devil says: You shall not die, if you do but cry for God's mercy at last, and give over the acts of sin when you can practice it no longer. And this is the word that the world believes. O heinous wickedness, to believe the devil before God!

And yet that is not the worst; but blasphemously they call this a believing and trusting in God, when they put him in the shape of Satan, who was a liar from the beginning; and when they believe that the word of God is a lie, they call this trusting God and say they believe in him, and trust in him for salvation. Where did ever God say, that the unregenerate, unconverted, unsanctified, shall be saved? Show me such a word in Scripture. I challenge you if you can. Why this is the devil's word, and to believe it is to believe the devil, and the sin that is commonly called presumption; and do you call this a believing and trusting in God? There is enough in the word of God to strengthen the heart of the sanctified; but not a word to strengthen the hands of wickedness, nor to give men the least hope of being saved, though they be never sanctified.

But if you will turn, and come into the way of mercy, the mercy of the Lord is ready to entertain you. Then trust God for salvation, boldly and confidently; for he is engaged by his word to save you. He will be a father to none but his children; and he will save none but those that forsake the world, the devil, and the flesh, and come into his family to be members of his Son, and have communion with his saints. But if they will not come in, it is the fault of themselves: his doors are open; he keeps none back; he never sent such a message as this to any of you, "It is now too late; I will not receive thee, though thou be converted." He might have done so and done you no wrong; but he did not; he does not to this day. He is still ready to receive you, if you were but ready unfeignedly, and with all your hearts to turn. And the fulness of this truth will yet more appear in the two following doctrines, which I shall therefore next proceed to, before I make any further application of this.

THE RICH FOOL.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine case, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."—Luke xii: 16-21.

There is great diversity in the parables of our Savior. Some of them are scarcely more than maxims. Some of them are sketches of pictures. Some of them are more elaborate, almost as much so as a history. This, although brief, is one of the most symmetrical, full of instruction in every member. Its point scarcely can be mistaken. There are no possessions more legitimately obtained, ordinarily, than those which come by husbandry. Here was a rich man whose possessions consisted of lands, and the product of lands. Already he was rich; but, as is wont to be the case, riches bred riches. His wealth was increasing. There was peculiar pertinence in selecting such an example. Otherwheres, and in other ways, wrongly-obtained riches are animadverted upon; but the lesson of this parable depends upon the fact that the man was pursuing an honorable calling; that he was obtaining from an honorable calling justifiable wealth.

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself—"

What an empire is this *thinking within one's self!* The sphere of thought is the sphere of true liberty! We can not walk where we please, but we can think as we please. We can not act as we choose. Customs restrain like walls. A man is obliged to limit his conduct, but every man possesses an interior liberty. Outwardly he can not spread his wings like a bird and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, but inwardly he can fly as he pleases. There is, too, a vast difference between what a man does and says, and what he thinks within himself. Oh, how many thefts a man thinks within himself! How many base jealousies! How many stupid ambitions! How many disallowable pleasures a man dallies with in his thoughts! What excursions of the imagination; what wondrous creations of this architect of thought; what a realm, wider than the scope of the heavens, broader than from horizon to horizon; what an illimitable realm is that which a man's silent thoughts traverse, and traverse so easily that there is no sound in their going, and so suddenly that there is no time occupied in their passage! The vast circuit of this immeasurable globe man passes easily, leaving no footfall, making no track, always finding new paths.

"And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

Men's thoughts within themselves are apt to be anxious and uneasy. First they think, "What shall I do to get riches?" Then, when they possess them, they begin anxiously to think, "What shall I do with riches?" Care in getting, care in investing, care in increasing, care in defending—riches and cares go together! And so a man that makes himself a servant of wealth is a slave from beginning to end.

"What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

This is all, it seems, that God's great goodness to him led him to think of. God had made the heavens to be to him as a bountiful bosom to the child. God made the seasons to be his servants, inspired the earth to be productive, maintained his reason, and all his active and executive skill. For all these there was no grateful thought. He did not think within himself, "Blessed be the name of God, from whose hand comes all wealth." He did not think within himself, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" No, still groping avariciously and selfishly, he says, "What shall I do with all my possessions?"

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

I will hoard—not spend; not lend; not distribute; not scatter abroad. I will hoard—that was his thought.

Now the mere increase of warehouses, and barns, and granaries to meet the increasing husbandry is not in itself wrong. It may be a part of the administration of consummate prudence. The thing itself is not a thing to be reprobated, yet it was in this case most wicked. The sin was not in the mere act, but in the spirit that directed it; for the spirit of the man was one of entire ingratitude toward God. If there had been no God, he could not have been more absolutely left out from his thought.

There was the want, also, of any proper consideration of the ends and uses of abundance; for though a man has a primary right to so much of that which he earns as shall sustain his own body and his household, he is also a debtor to those that are poorer than he. Were there none such about him? no needy relatives? no unfortunate neighbors? no helpless mother with orphan children struggling against the face of a hard poverty? no strangers? no friendless youths that needed a helping hand? Here sat this man in the midst of his increasing abundance, growing rich and richer, and his thought was, "What shall I do with it?" He heard no sighs. He saw no tears. He felt no humanity. "This will I do," he said; "I will build bigger barns. I will increase my store of useless wealth." He had already more than he wanted or could use for himself. He had to pile it higher and still store it away. And it is as useless to put away property that you can not use as it is to have gold in the bowels of the mountains of California. Of what use to a banker or broker is undug gold? And of what use to a man is property if he does not know how to use it?

As you will observe, there was a certain royal conceit in the whole of this personage of the parable.

"This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

Does it not recall another passage?

"The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

Now the king was as big a fool as if he had been this fool of the parable. Oh the arrogance, the towering conceit, which comes with success in life! How men are puffed up! How they think, because prosperity has blown to them, that they are more than other men! How censorious they grow! How they love to praise their own shrewdness by despising some other men's blundering! How they like to point men to their own frugality by pointing to other men's wasteful habits. "Ah," they say

"everything which he touches fails;" and the echo of that is, "Everything that I touch succeeds." Some men seem to be critics of others, whereas they are flattering painters of their own portraits.

But this is not the worst.

"There will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

In the first place, the whole ambition of this man was concentrated upon himself. He had not a thought outside of himself. The end of his living, the end of the property which was intrusted to him, the supreme end of the administration of all the effects in his hands, was this—*my own personal good.* There was not one drop spilled over. There was no thought of others.

But this man said, looking at more than he could use, and seeing the fresh-coming harvest, "All is for me." "I" was his god. He was a supreme egotist, and a most selfish worshiper of himself.

But then, even that seems to me less remarkable than this extraordinary address to his soul.

"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

Do you suppose that a man can feed his soul in that way? Can a soul be fed with silver or gold? Can a soul be made merry because outward goods increase? How beggarly the conception! How stultified the man appears by this very address to himself! He proposed to feed that which was divine with that which was essentially animal. He had no holy thoughts; no merciful inclinations; he had no chastened and purified aspirations; he had no sweet and loving affections; he had nothing that was glorious in holiness or beautiful in any wise. But, "Oh my soul," said he, "take thine ease." How many men there are that try to quiet their souls! How many men there are that say to their uneasiness, "Why art thou disquieted within me, O my soul? Art thou not rich?" A man's soul rich because his pocket is rich? How many men say, "Oh soul, what wilt thou? What have I not done for thee? Look abroad and behold the fields. They are all thine. Look upon all these harvests. They are thine. Glance up the mountain side, and measure all the stately trees thereon. All these things are thine; and all these mansions; and all these titles and bonds; and all this silver and gold." And the poor smothered soul says, "I will have none of them." The soul—has it a mouth? Can it eat, as a man's body can? The soul—is it a broker and exchanger of money? Does it love to hear the clink of gold and silver? Is that the soul?

This man of the parable has not committed a crime; he has not committed any unvirtuous action; as you will take notice, he was a husbandman without apparent blemish or dishonesty, acquiring property by legitimate means. But—mark the point of admonition. He does it without gratitude to God or humanity to his fellow-men. And he attempts to feed his soul with these outward things, and does not know that the soul must have something other and better than these wherewithal to feed.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Do you take notice how in the light of imagination are contrasted here a man's convictions and thoughts respecting himself, and God's thoughts about him? Was there a single man that lived within a day's journey of this man that did not praise him? Was this man's name ever mentioned in all the region round about but that men said, "Ah! one of the richest and most honorable men in the community?" When men were speaking of prosperity and thrift, was not he spoken of? Were there not pleasing titles addressed to him when men would gain his friendship? Did not

the man weave his own title out of these expressions of men's thoughts respecting him? If you had asked him, What is thy name? he would have said, My name is *The rich man.* What is thy name? *Prince among my fellows.* What is thy name? *The abounding man; The prosperous man; The eminent man; The great man of the neighborhood; the much-talked-of man.* What is his name, O Lord? *Fool.* He knew every name but the right one. The probability is that no man had ever addressed him by his true title. He had been called by the name of his childhood; but that was not his name. He had been called by names bred of wealth; but these were not his names. He had been called by names that came from men's flatteries; but these were not his true names. When God spoke to him out of eternal truth, he said to him, "Thou fool!" and that was his name. It is very strange that a man should live to be forty or fifty years of age and not know his own name. Oh, how many men there are in this congregation who have not the slightest conception of their nature and name. If I were to call out "Fool, come hither," who of you would stir? But when God comes to call men, by-and-by, with that irresistible voice, "Fool," oh my soul, is it thou that then wilt be obliged to hear and answer? Are there not many of you that walk in honor, and are girded about with praise, who, if God were to launch your title through the air and fix it quivering in you, would be obliged hereafter, by this strange baptism of God, to wear the name "Fool?"

What a contrast there was between the apparent and the real position in which this man stood! We read in the Bible of men's walking in a vain show. We read the exclamation of him of old, "How are they cast down, as in a moment!" Here was a man in the very focus of prosperity, and yet he stood withing a hand's-breadth of his own grave. He seemed to defend himself from the intrusion of misfortune, and yet he was soon to be cast down. He had all that men usually covet. He had wrapped himself round and round with many coverings of wool, and silk, and fine linen, and supplied himself with abundant stores of things pleasant to the eye, and of things pleasant to the palate, and was honored and respected; and now, having accomplished the purposes of his life, he began to lay himself back, as it were, and to say to himself, "Now the toil is over: now the accomplishment is reached; now take thine ease." And what sort of an ease was it? "Eat, drink, and be merry." Self-indulgence and lust, which is the end and outcome of very much of the prosperity of this world. Self-indulgent pampering, selfish luxury—this was it. And he seemed to himself, he seemed to men, to have reached the very climax at the very moment the hand of God was extended to smite him down utterly and forever.

"Then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?"

Men do not think of that. "It is mine" occupies the whole hemisphere of men's thoughts. There are very few that look beyond. There are very few that have the courage faithfully and truly to trace out what shall become of their possessions hereafter, that they have so carefully amassed, for which they have sacrificed so much of duty, for which often they have sold themselves. All this man's estate should be scattered. It should no more be gathered under one name. The implication is that it would be squandered. Some commentators think that that night he should be set upon by robbers, his life destroyed, and his treasures taken.

Consider, next, Christ's most searching application. "So is he"—that is, so is every one—"that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

What means this *so?* Just as great a fool as this poor rich fool just as absurd as he was in the sight of angels and of God, and just as imperiled.

It does not require, then, that a man should be a criminal in order to destroy himself. Nay, it does not require that a man should be immoral, nor that he should acquire his possessions by avaricious wrong-doing. A man may never vary from the truth, may never do a dishonest deed; he may follow a calling that is perfectly

allowable; he may amass riches legitimately; he may stand in the midst of those riches, and no man may be able to lay at his door a single charge; not one may be able to say to him, "Thou hast defrauded me;" not one may be able to show him a crooked place in the line that his life has drawn; he may be approved before men; and yet God may say to him, "Thou fool!" Why? Simply because he has made himself rich? No! But because he is rich only toward himself; he is not rich toward God.

Why, is not that the life of the animal, to be rich toward himself? Is not the browsing ox rich toward himself? Sleek and fat is he, but in what other direction is he rich? What does the ox think? He does not think—he browses. What do the swine think? They do not think—they eat. What does the bird of prey think? Nothing—he hungers and searches for prey. But man was meant to be a creature of thought, and of imagination, and of moral feeling, and of a character that is to prepare him for converse with God and angels in the other sphere; and a man that spends all his moral forces making himself rich in this life, and not rich toward God, is he not a fool, and bankrupt? The richer he is, the more bankrupt he is. Are there not many persons here who are rich in industry? But what hast thou toward God? what thoughts? what obedience? what love? what gratitude? what complacency? What is God to thy soul? Are there not many men who are rich in morality, walking circumspectly, with clean hands, and placing their feet in a right place withal? And yet, what do they lack? But a little? Oh moral man, you have taken care of your head, your eye, your ear. Every sense has been cared for. You have taken care of your body—dear, dainty body! You have solaced it with linen, and woolen, and silk. You have taken care of that precious stomach of thine by riches, by dainties and delicacies. Thy stomach shall not rise up in judgment against thee. Bountiful hast thou been as a master to that. But there is immortality beyond this veil. There is a soul that can not die. What hast thou done for that soul? Oh moral man, thou art to live in the presence of God. Where is thy title, and where are thy tastes? Thou art to speak another language than that of men upon earth. Speak now some sentences of the heavenly tongue. Thou art to be brighter than the stars if thy destiny be fulfilled, but where are the signs and tokens of it? Ten years since thy majority—twenty years—thirty adult years, and all spent in pampering that which goes down to dust? Your bones do not inherit immortality. Flesh and blood shall not enter the kingdom of God. Holy thoughts and the power of thinking them, heavenly aspirations and the power of realizing them—it is these things that belong to God's kingdom. It is these that can not die and that the world can not touch.

Thou hast been rich toward thy lower self, but thou hast not been rich toward God. Of all dreamy speculations, of all unreal things, of all things that seem like the last vanishing vapor of the sky, like the last lingering light of the evening, God has seemed to you the most mystic and remote, the most ineffable, and impalpable, the most unreal; and yet God is the great reality of time and eternity, the only absolute something. All your thought-power, and time, and strength have been squandered on the unsubstantial—the *real*, as you call it. All your time has been wasted in impoverishing your true self.

I do not reprobate enterprise; I do not reprobate blameless riches; but all things are in vain in which God has no partnership. No man can do business alone in this world and be safe. If you love, it is God and you that should love. If you aspire to power, it should be God and ambition in you that should work together. If you build riches, take care; there must be in the firm one other name—God. His will must be in you, working in all things, or all your work is vain.

Consider, in the light of this instructive parable, the perils that lie hidden in

every man's life. We know them occasionally, because they break out before us. And yet here is, as it were, a comprehensive and generic instruction, more striking because it is pictorial. This man stood in the midst of apparent life and health. There were no signs of danger in the heaven; there were none upon the earth; there were no signs in his body; he was full of cheer and happiness. He was congratulating himself. He tossed off his wine. He could not refrain himself. "Oh soul, happy soul, how fortunate to come into the possession of such a man as I am! Oh happy soul, eat, drink, and be merry." And he said this in the face of the ghostliest death, that grinned close to his red cheek. He could not see him. He could not feel the breath of his coming. There was no mildew in the air. And yet this man stood side by side with the tomb. Death was his nearest neighbor. Death was his sure companion. At the very moment when he was congratulating his soul on its abounding future, Death had already laid his hand upon him. "This night! *this night!*" said God.

What a translation out of the arrogance of wealth, out of the supremacy of selfishness, out of multiplied resources that had been perverted to the pampering of his own lower nature, while he forgot God, and did not care for his fellowmen! To be thus taken in an instant, unthinking and unprepared, into the presence of his God—what a change it was! And yet, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee."

Ah! my friends, his was not the only hidden peril. There is a hidden peril for every one of us. In the garden, and behind the rose it lurks; in the orchard, and behind the redolent bough; in the picture, while yet the artist's brush is laying on the pigment; in all your building, while the trowel is ringing upon the uprising wall; in all your digging, whether in the furrow or in the garden; in the erection of more ample warehouses and stores for the keeping of your goods—in all these there is peril.

There is not far from youth that hidden certainty of death. I am speaking to some that I shall never speak to again. You are marked. You are going away, and my eye shall never rest on you again. There are some of you now within a hand-breadth of the grave, and yet it doth not appear who it is. If I were to say that some sharp-shooter, hidden, would launch the fated bullet into the midst of this assembly, with what terror would the whole of you rise! and yet Death stands with bow drawn back to the uttermost, and that arrow is just on the string that will speed to some of you. You seem strong today. Tomorrow you shall be weak. You seem today to be honorable. Ere long eclipse is coming upon your fair name. You seem to be reveling in pleasures disallowed; but God marks you. You think that you are hidden from the eye of God because you are hidden from the eye of man, but it is a delusion. God's eye is ever on you, and your tomb is close by you. There is no contrast more awful to thoughtful men, and no infatuation more striking, than that which exists between the reality of a man's condition and that man's own thought of his condition.

If God should call you in a single night, and if it should be this night, tell me, are you prepared to make your final account? Are you prepared to leave things in this world just as they are, with no more done? Are you prepared to leave things undone as they are? Is there no justice that you owe? Have you filled up the measure of bounty? Is there no reparation to be made anywhere, and no restoration? Is there nothing to be repented of? Is there no half-filled duty of love? Are there no words to be recalled? Is there no quarrel to be reconciled? Is there no cleansing of the heart of vile thoughts, of wrong dispositions, or of base passions and appetites? Are you clean as one that emerges from the stream bathed and purified? Would your soul rise up out of your body unsullied if tonight God should call it? Are you prepared to meet your Judge, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Is there no taint, no sully, no selfishness, no cruelty of pride, no self-indulgence, no frivolity;

of vanity, no waste of conscience, no death-poison? How is it with you? If God should call your soul tonight, are you prepared to meet him? Is it not just as our Savior made it to be in the parable? Are not men living in a vain show, not a hand-breadth from death, though they seem to themselves to be far from it and secure?

Call up again that point of the parable in which the man is represented as addressing his soul. Is there anything in this world that is more painful than the efforts of men after happiness? When you yourself look out upon your neighbors, are you not a just critic of the foolishness of men in the ways in which they attempt to secure happiness? and yet, are you not substantially in the same way yourself?

My friends, there is a hunger of the body. We feed that with bread and with meat. But men seem not to have learned yet how to feed that hunger of the soul which breaks out in discontent, in repinings, in complainings sometimes; which breaks out more often in aspirations and yearnings, if one be of a noble turn of mind; which manifests itself never so strikingly as in that way. For, as you can not take a forest flower, and hold it up to the sun to make it more beautiful, but it casts a shadow on the ground by the very light which makes it bright, so, in mortal experience, there is no pleasure that does not trail after it a shadow; there is no experience by which a man attempts to satisfy his soul that does not leave behind a certain bitterness. And what is that but the soul saying "I am not content; I am not satisfied?" There are joys that satisfy. Of them Christ spoke. Drink of the sweetest water, and of the coolest that gushes from the side of the cool rock, and you will thirst again; but, says Christ, "He that taketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." You will hunger if you feed from the loaf; but Christ says, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger again."

Oh, my friends, go with me in imagination along the streets of New York. Let us, as if we were touched with the divine wisdom, as if we were companions of God, walk the ways of greatness. There stand two giants, one with overt might, and the other with secret and covert cunning, matching themselves before men, and shaking the market with their footsteps, and bringing on themselves the eyes of all. Which shall have the mastery in the great battle of riches? All the market stands back to see the fight of the giants. One shall count his money by millions and millions, and the other's money is uncountable. No man knows the depths of their exchequers and coffers; and ten thousand there are looking with greedy admiration upon the one and upon the other. Oh God, who are they? With phosphoric light I see standing over their portals the divine hand-writing, "Fool! fool!" And God says to them, "In a year or two whose shall all these things be?"

I see men that attract to themselves the eyes of all the crowd. What equipage could be more resplendent? They have gathered around themselves that which seems to consummate their felicity upon earth. They roll over the pavement, and roll through the park. They are found upon courses where all men do congregate for admiration of such things. They are at the climax of exhilaration and enjoyment. "Oh happy man!" men cry out. No returning echo comes, "Happy man;" but muffled, almost silent, comes back from the heavens, "Fool! fool!"

I look upon newly wedded love. It is the dew of heaven that has fallen upon young flowers. If it knows how to rise up from out of the senses, and to frame itself into divine loving; if it knows how to draw its pictures upon the background of eternity; and if it twines itself round and round the bosom and the heart of God, oh, this is soul-feeding love. But if to each the other is an idol; if each extracts from the other but an earthly love; if there is no other foundation than that which stands under mortal experience, then, while we look upon them, and congratulate them, and say, "Oh happy lovers!" God's voice suddenly distills through the air and says, "Fools! fools!"

Mother, if that child in thine arms is God's child, and if through that child, as through a lens, thou art looking at immortality and glory, blessed be thou of women; but if this child of thine is only a mortal child, an idol indeed, and in it thou seest only this world, oh fool!

Young man, with health and strength, with ambition and opportunity, if these take hold upon glory and immortality, oh, wise art thou; but if they stop this side of that, oh fool art thou! It is a sad thing to have a price put into a man's hands to get wisdom, and to squander it. Oh, it is a sad thing to be built for God, and end only with the dust which shall cover you. It is a sad thing for one to be brought up under the sound of the Gospel, to know his own necessities, to hear the truth of God sounding in his conscience, to be touched in his heart again and again; it is a sad thing for a man to see all the truth that gleams through the horizon of the Gospel, and after all to die as the fool dieth. "So is every one that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

When I was a lad, the old bell in the belfry used to ring a knell the sound of which I could not get out of my head for a month after hearing it. A young companion of mine died when I was absent at school, and I came back on the day of his funeral and heard that bell toll. And what tolling that was of the old New England belfries! How the sound reverberated, and rocked and rolled, and clung to the air, as if it never would die out! How that old bell filled the whole air full, ringing and ringing out the solemn tidings of mortality!

Oh that there might be some ringings from out of the belfry of God's heart that should fill the whole air of our thoughts and feelings in the same way! And if there be one stroke, if there be one bell whose tongue should more than another syllable to us lessons of instruction, it seems to me to be this: "So is every man that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

What are you laying up for God? Wherewithal are you rich toward God? "I am a Christian, I am a professor of religion," says one. So are many that shall say in that day, "Lord, thou hast taught in our streets. We have eaten and drunk in thy presence." And he shall say to them, "I never knew you." Beware lest, when you rise to go to your account, suddenly speeding through your wealth, breaking through your prosperity, coming out from the midst of your dissevered riches, and rising into the presence of God, he shall say to you, "I never knew you." Let love die here; let my name perish here; let my house pass to another; let my children wither as leaves upon a bough that has been plucked off; let my life be as him who dwelleth in a desert overblown with choking sands, if in that moment, when I stand in heaven, God shall say to me, "Enter; thou art welcome." In that one hour I shall reap more than compensation for all. But, though my house be builded of gold and silver, and my head crowned with chaplets of roses, and all sweet delights wait on my feet, and my life be one long-rolling symphony of joy, that one word, "Depart! I know you not," will overmaster and storm out of the memory the whole of this joy. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—Preached in Plymouth Church, March 22, 1868.

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE.

HORACE BUSHNELL.

Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.—Heb. vii: 16.

This word *after* is a word of correspondence, and implies two subjects brought in comparison. That Christ has the power of an endless life in his own person is certainly true; but to say that he is made a priest after this power subjective in himself, is awkward even to a degree that violates the natural grammar of speech. The suggestion is different; viz., that the priesthood of Christ is graduated by the wants and measures of the human soul as the priesthood of the law was not; that the endless life in which he comes, matches and measures the endless life in mankind whose fall he is to restore; providing a salvation as strong as their sin, and as long or lasting as the run of their immortality. He is able thus to save unto the uttermost. Powers of endless life though we be, falling principalities, wandering stars shooting downward in the precipitation of evil, he is able to bring us off, re-establish our dismantled eternities and set us in the peace and confidence of an eternal righteousness.

I propose to exhibit the work of Christ in this high relation, which will lead me to consider—

I. *The power of an endless life in man, what it is, and, as being under sin, requires.*

II. *What Christ, in his eternal priesthood, does to restore it.*

I. The power of an endless life, what it is and requires.

The greatness of our immortality, as commonly handled, is one of the dullest subjects, partly because it finds apprehension asleep in us, and partly because the strained computations entered into, and the words piled up as magnifiers, in a way of impressing the sense of its eternal duration, carry no impression, start no sense of magnitude in us. Even if we raise no doubt or objection, they do little more than drum us to sleep in our own nothingness. We exist here only in the germ, and it is much as if the life power in some seed, that, for example, of the great cedars of the west, were to begin a magnifying of its own importance to itself in the fact that it has so long a time to live; and finally, because of the tiny figure it makes, and because the forces it contains are as yet unrealized, to settle inertly down upon the feeling that, after all, it is only a seed, a dull, insignificant speck of matter, wanting to be a little greater than it can. Instead, then, of attempting to magnify the soul by any formal computation on the score of time or duration, let us simply take up and follow the hint that is given us in this brief expression, the power of an endless life.

It is a power, a power of life, a power of endless life.

The word translated *power* in the text, is the original of our word *dynamic*, denoting a certain impetus, momentum, or causative force, which is cumulative, grow-

ing stronger and more impelling as it goes. And this is the nature of life or vital force universally,—it is a force cumulative as long as it continues. It enters into matter as a building, organizing, lifting power, and knows not how to stop till death stops it. We use the word *grow* to describe its action, and it does not even know how to subsist without growth. In which growth it lays hold continually of new material, expands in volume, and fills a larger sphere of body with its power.

Now these innumerable lives, animal and vegetable, at work upon the world, creating and new-creating, and producing their immense transformations of matter, are all immaterial forces or powers; related, in that manner, to souls, which are only a highest class of powers. The human soul can not be more efficiently described than by calling it the power of an endless life; and to it all these lower immaterialities, at work in matter, look up as mute prophets, testifying, by the magical sovereignty they wield in the processes and material transformations of growth, to the possible forces embodied in that highest, noblest form of life. And sometimes, since our spiritual nature, taken as a power of life, organizes nothing material and external by which its action is made visible, God allows the inferior lives in given examples, especially of the tree species, to have a small eternity of growth, and lift their giant forms to the clouds, that we may stand lost in amazement before the majesty of that silent power that works in life, when many centuries only are given to be the lease of its activity. The work is slow, the cumulative process silent,—viewed externally, nothing appears that we name force, and yet this living creature called a tree, throbs internally in fullness of life, circulates its juices, swells in volume, towers in majesty; till finally it gives to the very word life a historic presence anl sublimity. It begins with a mere seed or germ, a tiny speck so inert and frail that we might even laugh at the bare suggestion of power in such a look of nothingness; just as at our present point of dullness and weakness, we can give no sound of meaning to anything said of our own spiritual greatness; and yet that seed, long centuries ago, when the tremendous babyhood of Mahomet was nursing at his mother's breast, sprouted apace, gathered to itself new circles of matter, year by year and age after age, kept its pumps in play, sent up new supplies of food, piling length on length in the sky, conserving still and vitalizing all; and now it stands entire in pillared majesty, mounting upward still, and tossing back the storms that break on its green pinnacles, a bulk immense, such as being felled and hollowed would even make a modern ship of war.

And yet these cumulative powers of vegetable life are only feeble types of that higher, fearfully vaster power, that pertains to the endless life of a soul—that power that known or unknown dwells in you and in me. What Abel now is, or Enoch, as an angel of God, in the volume of his endless life and the vast energies unfolded in his growth by the river of God, they may set you trying to guess, but can by no means help you adequately to conceive. The possible majesty to which any free intelligence of God may grow, in the endless increment of ages, is after all rather hinted than imaged in their merely vegetable grandeur.

Quickened by these analogies, let us pass directly to the soul or spiritual nature itself, as a power of endless growth or increment; for it is only in this way that we begin to conceive the real magnitude and majesty of the soul, and not by any mere computations based on its eternity or immortality.

What it means, in this higher and nobler sense, to be a power of life, we are very commonly restrained from observing by two or three considerations that require to be named. First, when looking after the measures of the soul, we very naturally lay hold of what first occurs to us, and begin to busy ourselves in the contemplation of its eternal duration. Whereas the eternal duration of the soul, at any given measure, if we look no farther, is nothing but the eternal continuance of its mediocrity or comparative littleness. Its eternal growth in volume and power is in that manner quite

lost sight of, and the computation misses everything most impressive, in its future significance and history. Secondly, the growth of the soul is a merely spiritual growth, indicated by no visible and material form that is expanded by it and with it as in the growth of a tree, and therefore passes comparatively unnoticed by many, just because they can not see it with their eyes. And then again, thirdly, as the human body attains to its maturity, and, finally, in the decays of age, becomes an apparent limit to the spiritual powers and faculties, we drop into the impression that these have now passed their climacteric, and that we have actually seen the utmost volume it is in their nature ever to attain. We do not catch the significance of the fact that the soul outgrows the growth and outlives the vigor of the body, which is not true in trees; revealing its majestic properties as a force independent and qualifiedly sovereign. Observing how long the soul-force goes on to expand after the body-force has reached its maximum and when disease and age have begun to shatter the frail house it inhabits, how long it braves these bodily decrepitudes, driving on, still on, like a strong engine in a poorly timbered vessel, through seas not too heavy for it, but only for the crazy hulk it impels,—observing this, and making due account of it, we should only be the more impressed with a sense of some inherent everlasting power of growth and progress in its endless life.

Stripping aside now all these impediments, let us pass directly into the soul's history, and catch from what transpires in its first indications the sign or promise of what it is to become. In its beginning it is a mere seed of possibility. All the infant faculties are folded up, at first, and scarcely a sign of power is visible in it. But a doom of growth is in it, and the hidden momentum of an endless power is driving it on. And a falling body will not gather momentum in its fall more naturally and certainly, than it will gather force, in the necessary struggle of its endless life now begun. We may think little of the increase; it is a matter of course, and why should we take note of it? But if no increase or development appears, if the faculties all sleep as at the first, we take sad note of that, and draw, how reluctantly, the conclusion that our child is an idiot, and not a proper man! And what a chasm is there between the idiot and the man! one a being unprogressive, a being who is not a power; the other a careering force, started on its way to eternity, a principle of might and majesty begun to be unfolded, and to be progressively unfolded forever. Intelligence, reason, conscience, observation, choice, memory, enthusiasm, all the fires of his inborn eternity are kindling to a glow, and, looking on him as a force immortal, just beginning to reveal the symptoms of what he shall be, we call him man. Only a few years ago he lay in his cradle, a barely breathing principle of life, but in that life were gathered up, as in a germ or seed, all these godlike powers that are now so conspicuous in the volume of his personal growth. In a sense, all that is in him now was in him then, as the power of an endless life, and still the sublime progression of his power is only begun. He conquers now the sea and its storms. He climbs the heavens, and searches out the mysteries of the stars. He harnesses the lightning. He bids the rocks dissolve, and summons the secret atoms to give up their names and laws. He subdues the face of the world, and compels the forces of the waters and the fires to be his servants. He makes laws, hurls empires down upon empires in the fields of war, speaks words that can not die, sings to distant realms and peoples across vast ages of time; in a word, he executes all that is included in history, showing his tremendous energy in almost everything that stirs the silence and changes the conditions of the world. Everything is transformed by him even up to the stars. Not all the winds, and storms, and earthquakes, and seas, and seasons of the world, have done as much to revolutionize the world as he, the power of an endless life, has done since the day he came forth upon it, and received, as he is most truly declared to have done, dominion over it.

And yet we have, in the power thus developed, nothing more than a mere hint or initial sign of what is to be the real stature of his personality in the process of his everlasting development. We exist here only in the small, that God may have us in a state of flexibility, and bend or fashion us, at the best advantage, to the model of his own great life and character. And most of us, therefore, have scarcely a conception of the exceeding weight of glory to be comprehended in our existence. If we take, for example, the faculty of memory how very obvious is it that as we pass eternally on, we shall have more and more to remember, and finally shall have gathered in more into this great storehouse of the soul than is now contained in all the libraries of the world. And there is not one of our faculties that has not, in its volume, a similar power of expansion. Indeed, if it were not so, the memory would finally overflow and drown all our other faculties, and the spirits, instead of being powers, would virtually cease to be anything more than registers of the past.

But we are not obliged to take our conclusion by inference. We can see for ourselves that the associations of the mind, which are a great part of its riches, must be increasing in number and variety forever, stimulating thought by multiplying its suggestives, and beautifying thought by weaving into it the colors of sentiment, endlessly varied.

The imagination is gathering in its images and kindling its eternal fires in the same manner. Having passed through many trains of worlds, mixing with scenes, societies, orders of intelligence and powers of beatitude—just that which made the apostle in Patmos into a poet, by the visions of a single day—it is impossible that every soul should not finally become filled with a glorious and powerful imagery, and be waked to a wonderfully creative energy.

By the supposition it is another incident of this power of endless life, that passing down the eternal galleries of fact and event, it must be forever having new cognitions and accumulating new premises. By its own contacts it will, at some future time, have touched even whole worlds and felt them through and made premises of all there is in them. It will know God by experiences correspondently enlarged, and itself by a consciousness correspondently illuminated. Having gathered in, at last, such worlds of premise, it is difficult for us now to conceive the vigor into which a soul may come, or the volume it may exhibit, the wonderful depth and scope of its judgments, its rapidity and certainty, and the vastness of its generalizations. It passes over more and more, and that necessarily, from the condition of a creature gathering up premises, into the condition of God, creating out of premises; for if it is not actually set to the creation of worlds, its very thoughts will be a discoursing in world-problems and theories equally vast in their complications.

In the same manner, the executive energy of the will, the volume of the benevolent affections, and all the active powers, will be showing, more and more impressively, what it is to be a power of endless life. They that have been swift in doing God's will and fulfilling his mighty errands, will acquire a marvelous address and energy in the use of their powers. They that have taken worlds into their love will have a love correspondently capacious, whereupon also it will be seen that their will is settled in firmness, and raised in majesty according to the vastness of impulse there is in the love behind it. They that have great thoughts, too, will be able to manage great causes, and they that are lubricated eternally in the joys that feed their activity, will never tire. What force, then, must be finally developed in what now appears to be the tenuous and fickle impulse, and the merely frictional activity of a human soul.

On this subject the scriptures indulge in no declamation, but only speak in hints and start us off by questions, well understanding that the utmost they can do is to waken in us the sense of a future scale of being unimaginable, and beyond the compass of our definite thoughts. Here they drive us out in the almost cold mathematical ques-

tion, what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Here they show us in John's vision, Moses and Elijah, as angels, suggesting our future classification among angels, which are sometimes called chariots of God, to indicate their excelling strength and swiftness in careering through his empire, to do his will. Here they speak of powers unimaginable as regards the volume of their personality, calling them dominions, thrones, principalities, powers, and appear to set us on a footing with these dim majesties. Here they notify us that it doth not yet appear what we shall be. Here they call us sons of God. Here they bolt upon us—But I said ye are gods; as if meaning to waken us by a shock! In these and all ways possible, they contrive to start some better conception in us of ourselves, and of the immense significance of the soul; forbidding us always to be the dull mediocrities into which, under the stupor of our unbelief, we are commonly so ready to subside. O, if we could tear aside the veil, and see for but one hour what it signifies to be a soul in the power of an endless life, what a revelation would it be!

But there is yet another side or element of meaning suggested by this expression, which requires to be noted. It looks on the soul as a falling power, a bad force, rushing downward into ruinous and final disorder. If we call it a principality in its possible volume, it is a falling principality. It was this which made the mighty priesthood of the Lord necessary. For the moment we look in upon the soul's great movement as a power, and find sin entered there, we perceive that everything is in disorder. It is like a mighty engine in which some pivot or lever is broken, whirling and crashing and driving itself into a wreck. The disastrous effects of sin in a soul will be just according to the powers it contains, or embodies; for every force becomes a bad force, a misdirected and self-destructive force, a force which can never be restored, save by some other which is mightier and superior. What, in this view, can be more frightful than the disorders loosened in it by a state of sin?

And what shall we say of the result or end? Must the immortal nature still increase in volume without limit, and so in the volume of its miseries; or only in its miseries by the conscious depths of shame and weakness into which it is falling? On this subject I know not what to say. We do see that bad minds, in their evil life, gather force and expand in many, at least, of their capabilities, on to a certain point or limit. As far as to that point or limit, they appear to grow intense, powerful, and, as the world says, great. But they seem, at last and apart from the mere decay of years, to begin a diminishing process; they grow jealous, imperious, cruel, and so far weak. They become little, in the girding of their own stringent selfishness. They burn to a cinder in the heat of their own devilish passion. And so, beginning as heroes and demigods, they many of them taper off into awfully intense but still little men—intense at a mere point; which appears to be the conception of a fiend. Is it so that the bitterness of hell is finally created? Is it toward this pungent, acrid, awfully intensified, and talented littleness, that all souls under sin are gravitating? However this may be, we can see for ourselves that the disorders of sin, running loose in human souls, must be driving them downward into everlasting and complete ruin, the wreck of all that is mightiest and loftiest in their immortality. One of the sublimest and most fearful pictures ever given of this you will find in the first chapter to the Romans. It reads like some battle among the gods, where all that is great and terrible and wild in the confusion, answers to the majesty of the powers engaged. And this is man, the power of an endless life, under sin. By what adequate power, in earth or in heaven, shall that sin be taken away? This brings me to consider—

II. What Christ, in his eternal priesthood, has done; or the fitness and practical necessity of it, as related to the stupendous exigency of our redemption.

The great impediment which the gospel of Christ encounters, in our world, that which most fatally hinders its reception, or embrace, is that it is too great a work

It transcends our belief, it wears a look of extravagance. We are beings too insignificant and low to engage any such interest on the part of God, or justify any such expenditure. The preparations made, and the parts acted, are not in the proportions of reason, and the very terms of the great salvation have, to our dull ears, a declamatory sound. How can we really think that the eternal God has set these more than epic machineries at work for such a creature as man?

My principal object, therefore, in the contemplations raised by this topic, has been to start some conception of ourselves, in the power of an endless life, that is more adequate. Mere immortality, or everlasting continuance, when it is the continuance only of littleness or mediocrity, does not make a platform or occasion high enough for this great mystery of the gospel. It is only when we see in human souls, taken as germs of power, a future magnitude and majesty transcending all present measures, that we come into any fit conception at all of Christ's mission to the world. Entering the gospel at this point, and regarding it as a work undertaken for the redemption of beings scarcely imagined as yet, of dominions, principalities, powers—spiritual intelligences so transcendent that we have, as yet, no words to name them—everything done takes a look of proportion; it appears even to be needed, and we readily admit that nothing less could suffice to restore the falling powers, or stop the tragic disorders loosened in them by their sin. How much more if, instead of drawing thus upon our imagination, we could definitely grasp the real import of our being, that which hitherto is only indicated, never displayed, and have it as a matter of positive and distinct apprehension. This power of endless life—could we lay hold of it; could we truly feel its movement in us, and follow the internal presage to its mark; or could we only grasp the bad force there is in it, and know it rushing downward, in the terrible lava-flood of its disorders, how true and rational, how magnificently divine would the great salvation of Christ appear, and in how great dread of ourselves should we hasten to it for refuge!

Then it would shock us no more that visibly it is no mere man that has arrived. Were he only a human teacher, reformer, philosopher, coming in our human plane to lecture on our self-improvement as men, in the measures of men, he would even be less credible than now. Nothing meets our want, in fact, but to see the boundaries of nature and time break way to let in a being and a power visibly not of this world. Let him be the Eternal Son of God and Word of the Father, descending out of higher worlds to be incarnate in this. As we have lost our measures, let us recover them, if possible, in the sense restored of our everlasting brotherhood with him. Let him so be made a priest for us, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life—the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person—God manifest in the flesh—God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. All the better and more proportionate and probable is it, if he comes heralded by innumerable angels, bursting into the sky, to congratulate their fallen peers with songs of deliverance—Glory to God in the Highest, peace on earth, good will toward men. Humbled to the flesh and its external conditions, he will only the more certainly even himself with our want, if he dares to say—before Abraham was, I am—all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Is he faultless, so that no man convinceth him of sin, revealing in the humble guise of humanity the absolute beauty of God; how could anything less or inferior meet our want? If he dares to make the most astounding pretensions, all the better, if only his pretensions are borne out by his life and actions. Let him heal the sick, feed the hungry, still the sea by his word. Let his doctrine not be human, let it bear the stamp of a higher mind and be verified and sealed by the perfection of his character. Let him be transfigured, if he may, in the sight of two worlds; of angels from the upper, and

of men from this; that, beholding his excellent glory, no doubt may be left of his transcendent quality.

No matter if the men that follow him and love him are, just for the time, too slow to apprehend him. How could they see, with eyes holden, the divinity that is hid under such a garb of poverty and patience? How could they seize on the possibility that this man of sorrows is revealing even the depths of God's eternal love, by these more than mortal burdens? If the factitious distinctions of society pass for nothing with him, if he takes his lot among the outcast poor, how else could he show that it is not any tier of quality, but our great fallen humanity, the power of an endless life, that engages him. And when, with a degree of unconcern that is itself sublime, he says—The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me; how else could he convey so fitly the impression that the highest royalty and stateliest throne to him is simple man himself?

But the tragedy gathers to its last act, and fearful is to be the close. Never did the powers of eternity, or endless life in souls, reveal themselves so terribly before. But he came to break their force, and how so certainly as to let it break itself across his patience? By his miracles and reproofs, and quite as much by the unknown mystery of greatness in his character, the deepest depths of malice in immortal evil are now finally stirred; the world's wild wrath is concentered on his person, and his soul is, for the hour, under an eclipse of sorrow; exceeding sorrowful even unto death. But the agony is shortly passed; he says, I am ready; and they take him, Son of God though he be, and Word of the Father, the Lord of glory, to a cross! They nail him fast, and what a sign do they give, in that dire frenzy, of the immortal depth of their passion! The sun refuses to look on the sight, and the frame of nature shudders! He dies! it is finished! The body that was taken for endurance and patience, has drunk up all the shafts of the world's malice, and now rests in the tomb.

No! there is more. Lo! he is not here, but is risen; he has burst the bars of death and become the first fruits of them that slept. In that sign behold his victory. Just that is done which signifies eternal redemption—the conquest and recovery of free minds, taken as powers dismantled by eternal evil. By this offering, once for all the work is finished. What can evil do, or passion, after this, when its bitterest arrows, shot into the divine patience, are by that patience so tenderly and sovereignly broken? Therefore now to make the triumph evident, he ascends, a visible conqueror, to the Father, there to stand as priest forever, sending forth his Spirit to seal, and testifying that he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

This, in brief historic outline, is the great salvation. And it is not too great. It stands in glorious proportion with the work to be done. Nothing else or less would suffice. It is a work supernatural transacted in the plane of nature; and what but such a work could restore the broken order of the soul under evil? It incarnates God in the world, and what but some such opening of the senses to God or of God to the senses, could reinstate him in minds that have lost the consciousness of him, and fallen off to live apart? What but this could enter him again, as a power, into the world's life and history? We are astonished by the revelation of divine feeling; the expense of the sacrifice wears a look of extravagance. If we are only the dull mediocrities we commonly take ourselves to be, it is quite incredible. But if God, seeing through our possibilities into our real eternities, comprehends, in the view, all we are to be or become, as powers of endless life, is there not some probability that he discovers a good deal more in us than we do in ourselves; enough to justify all the concern he testifies, all the sacrifice he makes in the passion of his Son? And as God has accurately weighed the worlds and even the atoms, accurately set them in

their distances and altitudes, has he not also in this incarnate grace and passion, which offend so many by their excess, measured accurately the unknown depths and magnitudes of our eternity, the momentum of our fall, the tragic mystery of our disorder? And if we can not comprehend ourselves, if we are even a mystery to ourselves, what should his salvation be but a mystery of godliness equally transcendent? If Christ were a philosopher, a human teacher, a human example, we might doubtless reason him and set him in our present scales of proportion, but he would as certainly do nothing for us equal to our want.

Inasmuch as our understanding has not yet reached our measures, we plainly want a grace which only faith can receive; for it is the distinction of faith that it can receive a medication it can not definitely trace, and admit into the consciousness what it can not master in thought. Christ therefore comes not as a problem given to our reason, but as a salvation offered to our faith. His passion reaches a deeper point in us than we can definitely think, and his Eternal Spirit is a healing priesthood for us, in the lowest and profoundest roots of our great immortality, those which we have never seen ourselves. By our faith in him too as a mystery, he comes into our guiltiness, at a point back of all speculative comprehension, restoring that peace of innocence which is speculatively impossible; for how in mere speculation can anything done for our sin, annihilate the fact; and without that, how take our guilt away? Still it goes! We know, as we embrace him, that it goes! He has reached a point in us, by his mysterious priesthood, deep enough even to take our guiltiness away, and establish us in a peace that is even as the peace of innocence!

So, if we speak of our passions, our internal disorders, the wild, confused and even downward rush of our inthralled powers, he performs, in a mystery of love and the Spirit, what no teaching or example could. The manner we can trace by no effort of the understanding; we can only see that he is somehow able to come into the very germ principle of our life, and be a central, regulating, new-creating force in our disordered growth itself. And if we speak of righteousness, it is ours, when it is not ours; how can a being unrighteous be established in the sense of righteousness? Logically, or according to the sentence of our speculative reason, it is impossible. And yet, in Christ, we have it! We are consciously in it, as we are in him, and all we can say is, that it is the righteousness of God, by faith, unto all and upon all them that believe.

But I must draw my subject to a close. It is a common impression with persons who hear, but do not accept, the calls of Christ and his salvation, that they are required to be somewhat less in order to be Christian. They must be diminished in quantity, taken down, shortened, made feeble and little, and then, by the time they have let go their manhood, they will possibly come into the way of salvation. They hear it declared that, in becoming little children, humble, meek, poor in spirit; in ceasing from our will and reason; and in giving up ourselves, our eagerness, revenge, and passion—thus, and thus only, can we be accepted; but, instead of taking all these as so many figures antagonistic to our pride, our ambition, and the determined self-pleasing of our sin, they take them absolutely, as requiring a real surrender and loss of our proper manhood itself. Exactly contrary to this, the gospel requires them to be more than they are—greater, higher, nobler, stronger—all which they were made to be in the power of their endless life. These expressions, just referred to, have no other aim than simply to cut off weaknesses, break down infirmities, tear away boundaries, and let the soul out into liberty, and power, and greatness. What is weaker than pride, self-will, revenge, the puffing of conceit and rationality, the constringing littleness of all selfish passion. And, in just these things it is that human souls are so fatally shrunk in all their conceptions of themselves; so that Christ encounters, in all men, this first and most insurmountable difficulty; to make

them apprised of their real value to themselves. For, no sooner do they wake to the sense of their great immortality than they are even oppressed by it. Everything else shrinks to nothingness, and they go to him for life. And then, when they receive him, it is even a bursting forth into magnitude. A new inspiration is upon them, all their powers are exalted, a wondrous inconceivable energy is felt, and, having come into the sense of God, which is the element of all real greatness, they discover, as it were in amazement, what it is to be in the true capacity.

A similar mistake is connected with their impressions of faith. They are jealous of faith, as being only weakness. They blame the gospel, because it requires faith, as a condition of salvation. And yet, as I have here abundantly shown, it requires faith just because it is a salvation large enough to meet the measures of the soul, as a power of endless life. And, O, if you could once get away, my friends, from that sense of mediocrity and nothingness to which you are shut up, under the stupor of your self-seeking and your sin, how easy would it be for you to believe! Nay, if but some faintest suspicion could steal into you of what your soul is, and the tremendous evils working in it, nothing but the mystery of Christ's death and passion would be sufficient for you. Now you are nothing to yourselves, and therefore Christ is too great, the mystery of his cross an offense. O, thou spirit of grace, visit these darkened minds, to whom thy gospel is hid, and let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, shine into them! Raise in them the piercing question, that tears the world away and displays the grimace of its follies—What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

I should do you a wrong to close this subject without conducting your minds forward to those anticipations of the future which it so naturally suggests. You have all observed the remarkable interest which beings of other worlds are shown, here and there in the scripture, to feel in the transactions of this. These, like us, are powers of endless life, intelligences that have had a history parallel to our own. Some of them, doubtless, have existed myriads of ages, and consequently now are far on in the course of their development—far enough on to have discerned what existence is, and the amount of power and dignity there is in it. Hence their interest in us, who as yet are only candidates, in their view, for a greatness yet to be revealed. And the interest they show seems extravagant to us, just as the gospel itself is, and for the same reasons. They break into the sky, when Christ is born, chanting their All-Hail. They visit the world on heavenly errands, and perform their unseen ministries to the heirs of salvation. They watch for our repentances, and there is joy among them before God, when but one is gathered to their company, in the faith of salvation. And the reason is that they have learned so much about the proportions and measures of things, which as yet are hidden from us. These angels that excel in strength, these ancient princes and hierarchs that have grown up in God's eternity and unfolded their mighty powers in whole ages of good, recognize in us compeers that are finally to be advanced, as they are.

And here is the point where our true future dawns upon us. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. We lie here in our nest, unfledged and weak, guessing dimly at our future, and scarce believing what even now appears. But the power is in us, and that power is to be finally revealed. And what a revelation will that be! Is it possible, you will ask in amazement, that you, a creature that was sunk in such dullness, and sold to such trivialities in your bondage to the world, were, all this time, related to God and the ancient orders of his kingdom, in a being so majestic!

How great a terror to some of you may that discovery be! I can not say exactly how it will be with the bad minds, now given up finally to their disorders. Powers of endless life they still must be; but how far shrunk by that stringent selfishness, how far burned away, as magnitudes, by that fierce combustion of passion, I do not

know. But, if they diminish in volume and shrink to a more intensified power of littleness and fiendishness, eaten out, as regards all highest volume, by the malice of evil and the undying worm of its regrets, it will not be so with the righteous. They will develop greater force of mind, greater volume of feeling, greater majesty of will and character, even forever. In the grand mystery of Christ and his eternal priesthood,—Christ, who ever liveth to make intercession,—they will be set in personal and experimental connection with all the great problems of grace and counsels of love, comprised in the plan by which they have been trained, and the glories to which they are exalted. Attaining thus to greater force and stature of spirit than we are able now to conceive, they have exactly that supplied to their discovery which will carry them still further on, with the greatest expedition. Their subjects and conferences will be those of principalities and powers, and the conceptions of their great society will be correspondent; for they are now coming to the stature necessary to a fit contemplation of such themes. The Lamb of redemption and the throne of law, and a government comprising both will be the field of their study, and they will find their own once petty experience related to all that is vastest and most transcendent in the works and appointments of God's empire. O, what thoughts will spring up in such minds, surrounded by such fellow intelligences, entered on such themes, and present to such discoveries! How grand their action! How majestic their communion! Their praise how august! Their joys how full and clear! Shall we ever figure, my friends, in scenes like these? O, this power of endless life!—great King of Life, and Priest of Eternity, reveal thyself to us, and us to ourselves, and quicken to us this unknown future before us.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

I John v:4-5.

It would be very interesting if we could have an hour's conversation with an intelligent Pharisee or Sadducee of the time of our Lord, and find out the way in which this religious revival among the poorer Jews appeared to their judgment. There must have been sarcastic Sadducees who had a kind of compassionate admiration mingled with their scorn, for the enthusiasm of the fisherfolk, and who, men of the world, and alive to all the movements of humanity, looked at "the sect of Jesus" with a slight touch of intellectual interest, as a curious psychological phenomenon.

There must have been some keen political doctors among the Pharisees, zealous, but not too zealous, such as we may infer Gamaliel was, who were interested in all religious movements, and examined them with tolerance and historical curiosity.

We may imagine, without any improbability, that the judgment of both these men would be pretty much the same, though arrived at by different means. "This will not last," they would say; "enthusiasm so imprudent will burn itself away in contact with the general indifference, or, if it go further, will be burnt up by a

vigorous opposition. This man Jesus, if he persists in his denunciations of our parties (and many of them are on the whole deserved), will become a trouble to us, and an object of hatred to our fanatics. We shall get rid of him, and when the head of the movement is gone, it will fall to pieces. It is unfortunate that his death is inevitable, for he is a good man; but what are you to do with an enthusiast, who is so pitifully ignorant of the world?"

So Gamaliel may have spoken, and then, after the crucifixion, congratulated himself on his knowledge of the world.

For nearly two months not a single event would disturb his intellectual self-confidence. Probably he would hear some rumor of the resurrection, at which he would smile with scorn; he would hear at least, as a fact, that the disheartened followers of the crucified had gone back to their usual work in Galilee, and that all had ended quietly. When suddenly the whole matter took a new form. Gamaliel heard that these fishermen and their followers, about a hundred in all, had actually come forward in Jerusalem, more enthusiastic than ever, proclaiming that the man Jesus was the Messiah, that he had risen from the dead, that he was now ascended into heaven, and called by their voice on all men to believe in him as Lord and Christ; that three thousand had been carried away by the first sermon, that numbers were joining the party every day, and that an absolute wonder had been worked—the lame man, whom he knew well, into whose hand at the beautiful gate he had so often dropt an alms, had suddenly been cured in the name of Jesus.

"This is a curious phenomenon," he would say, "and worth my study. It does not follow the usual course of religious revivals; its novelty is interesting. But there is nothing to give it endurance if the blind zeal of our religious bigots does not add strength to the movement. It may be pushed by persecution into importance. I shall go to the Sanhedrin and modify their folly.

So, calling his pupil Saul, in whom he had much confidence, Gamaliel went to the council, and heard with great gravity the examination of Peter and John. When it was over and the council were alone, he made a politic speech, excellent for its end, and interesting to us for the vein of concealed irony against his fellow-counselors, and the intellectual scorn for the apostles, with which it was pervaded.

"Ye men of Israel," he said, "take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to naught. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

Nothing could be happier than this speech, and Gamaliel left the Sanhedrin content with himself. Walking home with Saul, he may have recapitulated it to his pupil. "There have been," he would say, "two revivals already in these times of excitement, and they have both broken down. I see no reason, but the contrary, why this should last longer than the rest. I grant that it is distinct from the others in origin and manner. It is not political, nor does it appeal to popular sympathies, but that only makes it more sure of failure. The only man of real power in it is dead; this resurrection is too absurd even to speak of; the principles on which the movement is founded, such as I heard to-day from those enthusiasts, who spoke surprisingly well, will bring them into opposition with the whole world. They oppose both our parties. The Sadducees will resent the notion of a new religion, and will

employ the weapon of contemptuous scorn against their assertion of a resurrection. The fanaticism of our Pharisees, from which I have not been able, Saul, even to set you free, will persecute them from city to city, hating especially that success with the common people, which is so antagonistic to the priestly power for which I do not care. Moreover, if these men be allowed to go on, we shall all be proved to be wrong in permitting the death of Jesus; indeed they stated as much to-day. At present the Roman world does not heed them; but if they should persist in warring against us, they will stir up the Jewish mob against them, riots will take place, and Rome will punish them as disturbers of public order; and once Rome begins, she will make an end of them—the iron nation is not scrupulous."

So might Gamaliel at that time have spoken, and there are hundreds of political men among us who would have said, in his place, exactly the same things. But that which must have entirely, in his eyes, destroyed the possibility of the success of the Christian movement was the determined attack which, led by his own pupil, it began some years after to make upon the whole fabric of paganism in the country and of paganism and infidelity in the towns of the empire. "These few wanderers are contending right in the teeth of the genius of the age, right in the teeth of the spirit of the whole world. They intend to prove that Greek, Jew, Roman, Asiatic, Alexandrian, are all wrong. They aver—and this is most ridiculous—that their religion will suit all these diverse nations. Do they imagine that they can revolutionize the whole of society, of thought, of feeling, the habits, manners, and customs of centuries? It is exquisite absurdity."

Absurd as it seemed, it was the very thing they set themselves to do, not only without a shadow of despair, but with a triumphant security of victory. Nor was it with any blindness of enthusiasm that they began. They were not like men who rush with audacity upon a danger because they are ignorant of it. They had counted the cost, and they went forward fully aware of their work. Their master had impressed upon their mind that they would be most victorious (and it was an original declaration), when they were apparently most defeated. They quietly accepted this position, and with unexampled hardihood presented a front of a few unlearned men and weak women to the onslaught of the world. Not an eyelid wavered, not a heart sank, as they went to battle, knowingly to die, but in death, they knew, to conquer. Listen to St. John: "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world." And the strange thing is that, born of God, they did overcome the world; the whole body of the old society of Judaism and of Heathenism actually crumbled to pieces before these few resolute men.

What was the spell which wrought this wonder? Was it force? They might have had it, like Theudas and Judas, but they would not use it. They remembered their master's temptation in the wilderness. Their force lay in submission.

Was it cunning diplomacy? Fraud? It is impossible to impute these to the character of any of the apostles. Imagine St. Peter playing the diplomatist or St. Paul the part of by-ends. They were, on the contrary, extremely imprudent.

Was it intellectual acumen by which they did their work? They did not possess it, and, by itself, they depreciated it. It was by a greater power than any of these—by the power of faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Faith, in St. John's idea, is the conquering principle. And this not only in religion, but in common life. For Christian faith is not a thing apart from our nature, and imposed upon it from without; it is the expansion of an original quality; it is the spiritualization of a natural quality; it is the daily faith by which we live brought into contact with the highest possible subject and in the contact with the

divine made divine. So glorified, it overcomes the world. But even unglorified, it has this overcoming power. No one conquers without it.

That is not true, perhaps you say. It is not faith, but prudence and skill and wealth which are victorious. In war, for instance, "Heaven is on the side of the best artillery." I reply, first, that prudence is a form of faith; secondly, that I have not said that in such a matter as war, faith *alone* conquers; but that faith is necessary for conquest. Take away belief in their cause, or belief in their general, from the soldiers, and all the skill and money and artillery are useless. The men will fight languidly, or run away.

Moreover, a better appointed army, better munitions of war, are in themselves a proof of a higher foregoing faith of the nation, in itself, in its genius, and in the end to be attained.

Nor is it always numbers and the best artillery which conquer. Frederick the Great, with a few intervals, believed in his success, and his soldiers believed in him, and he maintained himself by this faith, almost alone against Europe.

On the whole, the victory falls in the end to those who have the largest amount of faith. In the end, I say, for we must not expect faith always to win at once. It acts on the *spirits* of men—a slow process—and produces chiefly that perseverance which refuses to own itself beaten. It may be overcome again and again, but it finally exhausts the force which has nothing spiritual to back it. Italy had faith in its liberation and unity, but it was crushed in 1848. Of what use was its faith? But look forward twenty years, and see what faith has done, and we have our answer.

In one way or another, all the greatest things are done by it; but whether it be lastingly victorious or not, depends upon the quality of the faith, whether it be in opposition to the spirit of the world, or on the side of the world. If it be the latter, Faith will probably win its victory quickly; if the former, slowly. But the victory of the latter will be short-lived, of the former eternal.

The faith which carried Mahometanism over a fourth part of the globe was a faith which linked itself to the powers of the world—force and fraud. The faith which was victorious in Christianity abjured, in idea at least, the powers of the world, and on the whole continues to abjure them, and the result is that, though not so rapidly successful as Mahometanism, it is growing stronger as Mahometanism grows weaker.

For faith is a noble and spiritual quality, and when it is bound to ignoble and worldly things, it suffers as the living body tied to the dead by the tyrant; it corrupts and dies. Then it is that the powers of the world to which faith gave for a time a semblance of life betray at once, when it is dead, their own innate death.

But the most victorious faith is that which has to do, not with ideas, but with a person, for then the deepest heart-passion comes in to give a living soul to faith. St. Paul saw this truth when he spoke of faith which worketh by love.

But, as above, so in this case, also, the lastingness of the victory of faith depends on the nobility of the person believed in. Nothing shatters life so completely, nothing so makes a desert of the world, as the discovery of the meanness or impurity of those in whom we have believed. Nothing makes life so victorious as finding that the object of our faith continues great and good.

Christianity meets both these needs in our nature. It does not say, Believe in ideas, but believe in Christ, and it manifests Christ as the unalterable goodness. Who is he that overcometh? Even he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ.

To believe in Jesus as the Christ, what does it mean? It means to believe in perfect humanity, in God in man.

Most of us believe in exactly the contrary. We believe in roguery, in suspicion,

in selfishness, in every man having his price, in the vanity, folly, and sinfulness of humanity. Half our actions—God forbid I should say the whole!—are built upon this miserable faith; and it is nothing more, in spite of its orthodoxy, than a hearty belief in the devil in man.

Now one part of faith in Christ is to deny all that; is to believe that the true humanity is *not that*, but something quite different—the humanity, namely, which was lived out long ago in Palestine.

Such a faith will overcome the world and the worldly spirit. Believe in the devil in man, and we are slaves of the world, forced to use its powers and its means to live, forced to meet selfishness by selfishness, suspicion by suspicion, lying by lying. Every day we degrade and are degraded.

Believe in Christ, in God in man, and we rise above the world and the use of the world. We meet selfishness by love, suspicion by confidence, lying by truth. We grow better, and we make men better. We have a hope for the race, by which we live ourselves and in which we can live for others. Our eyes are opened to see the goodness in men. The drunken sailors of Columbus saw nothing in the carved wood, and the strange bird, and the floating seaweed, for the tyranny of the present, fear and suspicion, were upon them; but the calm figure watching on the prow saw in them—America.

And he who is drunk with the present, who believes only in the world in the heart of man, sees nothing in the waifs and strays of nobility, self-sacrifice, and endurance which are cast up before him in the lives of even the worst of the race. They are not prophetic to him. But to us who know and believe in the sinless humanity which has been, they speak of the final perfection of the race, of that new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. We have in our faith "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Again, to believe in Christ is not to believe in ideals, but in ideals realized in a human life. The great philosophers of the ancient world believed in love, truth, justice, and purity. They aspired to reach them and retain them, but they swept away from their embrace like phantom forms of cloud before a rushing wind. For beautiful as their ideal was, it had no heart, no life, no human reality. No human love could be given to it. It was not bound up with social or domestic life. Faith in it produced little, for it was not a faith which worked by human love. Hence the life of the noblest heathen was a desperate effort to realize the mighty dreams and longings of the heart. It was not altogether in vain. God must have satisfied in another world that lofty passion of desire. I have often fancied with delight the rapture of Socrates, Plato, Zeno, when the truth and the light they had been toiling all their lives to find burst upon them in the revelation of the Word made flesh; but here, on earth, there ever came after their brightest vision an encroaching shadow of doubt in which aspiration sank down, trembling with cold and palsy-stricken. They had nothing absolutely perfect in human nature on which to build their faith, no ground for assurance of human attainment in a human life which had attained and triumphed. But *we* have, and it is shame and sorrow if we do not walk worthy of our knowledge.

God has recognized that it was necessary for the victoriousness of faith that the ideals of human nature should be embodied in a perfect personality, capable of being profoundly loved; so he gave us the revelation of a human God, faith in whom is rooted and grounded in love. The difference being our feeling in reading the vague ideality of Shelley's aspirations, and in reading the practical realization of love in the Gospel story, represents almost exactly the difference between the faith of the Greek, who wanted a Divine Person to love, and the faith of the Christian, for whom that want has been satisfied.

Lastly. Faith in Christ overcomes not only the world without, but the spirit of the world within our hearts.

He who believes in perfect love, and loves it in the Savior, *cannot* live the life of selfishness. He is borne spontaneously above it. He who lives in adoration of an invisible character cannot live in and for the sensual and the visible alone. The love of money and its curse of gnawing restlessness; the love of frivolity and its curse, a vain and petty soul; the love of excitement and its curse, exhausted energies and drear satiety; religious moroseness and its curse, a lonely and hateful life; devotion to the transient and its curse, the grave; over all these the believer in Christ must, he cannot help it, soar triumphant.

For the world overcomes us, or we the world. Here is death come to claim you, and your wealth and position, your work and your enjoyments, all this passing business, to which you gave your whole heart, refuse to have anything to do with your dead body, and naturally have nothing to do with your soul. They come to your bedside, to look their last look upon you. They say farewell and go, and you are left alone. In that hour your soul is speechless. It has never learnt anything. The world has overcome you.

But let death come and find you believing in Christ. It is plain that for the loss of all these things you do not specially care, for you have lived above them. You have used them as servants to advance a greater work, as means to realize more fully a glorious world. There is no longer any need of them, for now you enter into the perfect work and the perfect world. They come to your bedside to say farewell. You dismiss them with the smile of a master, and are grateful that you have enjoyed so much. They go to serve another, but you are not alone. You have overcome the world, and another world is yours. You are not leaving home, you are going home. You are not leaving all the charm and movement of society, you are going to live in a more varied and active society than any upon earth. You are not abandoning the masculine pleasure of work and the enthusiasm of production, you are entering into a wider sphere of work with full-grown and creative energies. It is not death but life which is becoming yours; not failure, but victory which sounds its music in your dying ear; the fulness of life, which is love, the fulness of victory, which is the sinless perfection attained in immediate spiritual union with him through faith in whom on earth you overcame the world.

DANGER OF NEGLECTING THE GOSPEL.

THOMAS CHALMERS.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."—Hebrews ii: 3.

We recently observed, in discoursing on the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of him crucified, that some were visited with an alarming sense of danger, and were long kept in a state of pain and of perplexity, and had much of disquietude upon their spirits—ere they found their way to a place of rest, or a place of enlargement. They had to describe a course of dark and strong agitation among the terrors of the law, ere they arrived at their secure haven among the comforts of the gospel. And manifold is the recorded experience of those, on whose desolate hearts the light of the offered reconciliation never beamed—till they had been preyed upon for months and years, by the remorse of a coming guilt, by the dread of a coming vengeance.

But we further observed, that, though this was frequent in the history of conversions, it was far from universal. And why should it? There is a message of pardon from heaven at our door; and its very first demand upon us, is that we should give credit thereto. If any one claim upon us be preferable to another, surely it is the claim of him who cannot lie, that we shall believe in his testimony. Are we to hold the truth of God at abeyance, aye and until we have walked some round of mental discipline and experience, that may liken the history of our translation from darkness unto light, to that of some fellow-mortal who has gone before us? Are we to postpone our faith in an actual report, brought to us from the upper sanctuary, till we have brought the frame of our spirits to its right adjustment, by having traveled over a course of certain feeling and certain fluctuations? Meanwhile let us recollect, that an embassy from heaven is waiting to be heard; that it is charged with the tidings of an atonement for sin wherewith God is satisfied, if we are but satisfied; that we lie under a peremptory invitation to look unto Christ and be saved; and that overtures of peace and of forgiveness are before us, of which we are expressly bidden to entertain and to close with them.

This is a light, in which the gospel hath dawned upon some at the very outset of their religious earnestness; and no sooner did it so shine upon them than they rejoiced. The earliest morning of their Christianity arose in gladness—so that they were scarcely sensible of any tempestuous passage midway, from the peace of nature to the peace of the gospel. The call to believe, they felt to be imperative; and coming as it did with what they were made to recognize as a voice of authority, it permitted not the lapse of a single day, between the conviction that they were great sinners, and the consolation that Christ was a great Savior. They felt that they had no right to suspend their assurance in the truth of what God said, till they had completed a given period of sighing and of sorrowing, because of their unworthiness. And so, they drew almost instantly to the tidings of great joy, that there is salvation for all who will; and of course they as instantly became joyful. Their transition seems to have been immediate, from a state of ungodliness to a sense of God as their reconciled

Father. Some, in the process of being alive under God, are made first alive to him as their offended judge; and then alive to him as their friend, whose anger has been turned away, and who has naught towards them but thoughts of peace and of great kindness. Others again arrive at this without any stepping-stone. They are drawn at once by the cords of love, without being driven by the terrors of the law. Instead of being awakened by the thunders of its violated authority, they are awakened, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, by a music of sweeter and softer utterance, that breathes peace on earth and good-will even to the guiltiest of all its generations.

Now we should not object to any one individual who is here present being so awakened. Let the habit and history of his life up to this moment have been what they may, we could not forbid that he should now look to the amplitude and the freeness of the gospel offer, and therein rejoice. Though never visited till now, with one thought of practical seriousness towards God—yet even now is it competent for him, to meet the Father of his spirit and count on a Father's tenderness. We ask not one moment of distrust or despondency at his hand; and should like it rather, that, sunken though he be in the depths of spiritual lethargy, he were aroused therefrom, not by the appalling denunciations of vengeance, but by the sounds of jubilee, and the proclaimed welcome from heaven of a God waiting to be gracious. We know that there is a peace where there is no peace; and better than this sleep of death, were the disturbance of loud and perpetual alarm, from which there might be no respite to the sinner, till forced to betake himself to the alone effectual hiding-place. But better most assuredly still, that you saw the hiding-place to be open now; and that, without the interval of a single moment, you now fled for refuge there, and that the soul had no sooner broken loose from the tranquillity of nature, than it instantly fastened on the anchor of a hope that was more sure and steadfast. At this rate there would be no season of intermediate dreariness. Converts would experience now, what was oft experienced in the days of the apostles. Their belief would instantly come in the train of the gospel testimony—and their joy would instantly come in the train of their belief. The glad tidings of the New Testament would have precisely the same effect upon their spirit, with any other glad tidings. It would simply make them glad; and so, without the gloom or the agitation or the terror through which many have to pass, might there be a direct hold on the promises of scripture—the settled peacefulness of a heart that has found its rest and its dependence under the canopy of the accepted mediatorship.

We know that there are some who apprehend a danger in making the salvation of the gospel too accessible—who think that it ought not thus to be cheapened down to a level with any of those common beauties of nature, to the free participation of which all are welcome—who would demand in every instance a course of preceding terror, ere the disciple shall reach the triumph or the tranquillity of Faith—who feel as if it were due to the vindication of God's dignity as a lawgiver, that every believer shall be solemnized into a more awful sense of the evil of sin, than he is likely to attain, by an easy and immediate transition from a state of wrath to a state of acceptance—and who, for this purpose, would have him to undergo the chastening of a legal discipline, during which he might taste the bitterness of remorse; and be left for a season to mourn or tremble under the hidings of God's offended countenance. Now we dispute not that this is one, and a very common way, in which the law acts as a school-master for bringing men to Christ. Yet it is not the invariable way. And still we affirm, that the gospel cannot be trusted in too soon; and that men cannot give up too early their doubt and their unbelief in the truth of heaven's communication; and that the more quickly we are rid of all suspense, in regard to God's own testimony, the better—or in other words, the more shortly that the period of dread and disturbance comes to an end, and the sooner we thus arrive at the tranquillity

of the Christian faith, the more prompt and therefore the more pleasing is the homage that we render unto God's faithfulness.

And there is naught in the freeness of the gospel, that should cheapen or degrade the honors of the law. For in reference to those who do accept the offer of its immunities, Christ hath made ample provision for all their offences and indignities against the law of God, by taking upon himself the burden of their atonement. And in reference to those who decline the offer, against them the law still reserves the right of its entire vindication. Those penalties, which, by fleeing to Christ, they might have evaded, will all be discharged upon them; and the frown of offended majesty will gather into tenfold darkness, because, to the provocation of a broken commandment, they have added the further provocation of a despised and rejected amnesty. Their first blow was at the scepter of heaven's authority; and for this they have incurred condemnation. Their second blow is at the scepter of heaven's clemency; and for this they seal their condemnation, and make it irreversible. It is most true, that, by the constitution of the gospel, there is a free and willing dispensation of mercy to all who will; and the vilest of sinners may at the instant, set himself down under the shadow of it, and be safe. Some have listened to its call, and the law has not been degraded by their justification—for in the person and sacrifice of Christ, the noblest of all indemnities has been rendered to it. And many have been unheeding of the call, and neither in them has the law been degraded or brought to shame—for the justice of God will only burn the more fiercely, because the voice of his compassion has been lifted up in vain. In very proportion to the tenderness of that slighted call which came forth from the mercy-seat, will be the force and the power of that anger which shall descend from the throne of judgment on the still unreclaimed hosts of the rebellious. The more rich the provision of grace is, the more fell and hopeless will be the condemnation of those guilty, who have spurned it away from them. If the herald of forgiveness have made full and open proclamation, the executioner of vengeance who comes after him, will on that account break forth in the uttermost of his fury on all whom he finds to be still standing on the ground of defiance. Should the sacredness of God have appeared to let itself down by a proposal of fellowship with sinners—tremendous will be the reaction of his offended dignity on those sinners who shall refuse to entertain it. The very greatness of the offered deliverance will be the sorest aggravation to the doom of those who have met it with repulse and indignity—for how can they escape, when they neglect so great a salvation?

Such an economy is at one with the most familiar and recognized principles that are current in human society. The man who has been insulted and defrauded by another, and has suffered the provocation of many sore and repeated injuries at his hand, is admitted to have a direct claim of redress and reparation. But should he forbear the prosecution of the claim—should he, in the tenderness of his nature towards the individual who had aggrieved him, stifle the vindictive propensities of his heart, and give way to a pitying sensation in behalf of himself and his family—should he, by a movement of generosity, hold out the right hand of fellowship, and assure the author of all his wrongs, that still his only desire was for peace, and his only purposes were those of yet unquelled kindness and regard for him—should he, though the offended party, come down so far as to entreat a reconciliation; and to protest, in the voice of a supplicant, his readiness to forgive all and to forget all—who among you does not feel from the workings of his own bosom, that, though it were possible to stand out the provocation of direct and multiplied offences, yet to stand out the provocation of trampling under foot the despised and derided clemency that has been so generously awarded may not be possible? The malice, and the calumny, and the injustice of the man, may all be borne with; but the contempt, and

the carelessness wherewith he hears of the offered pardon, or eyes the advances of a wished-for and attempted reconciliation—this cannot be borne with. The power of sufferance may have been tried beyond the limit of that uttermost compression whereof it is capable—but when at length it does break forth in the might of its elasticity; and overleaps all those barriers of restraint, within which the angry passions of nature lay struggling, as in the bosom of a volcano—who does not see that the patience and the long-suffering, which were in the mind of the long unwearied benefactor, and above all the message of forgiveness which proceeded from his lips—who does not see that these are the very causes which enhance the guilt of the scorner, the very elements which bring the most overwhelming discharge upon him?

And this is the very evolution which takes place under the economy of the gospel. You are now beseeched by the meekness and the gentleness of Christ. In a little while, and you may run to hide yourselves from the wrath of the Lamb. To-day, if you will hear his voice, the goodness of God would lead you unto repentance. But if, in the hardness of thine impenitent heart, the touch of a practical impulse be quite unfelt by you, then is there another day which is called the day of the righteous judgments of God. There is not a hearer now present, who is not honestly invited to kiss the Son while he is in the way—but, along with the invitation, he must also take the alternative, that time is short; and the way of reconciliation will soon be closed against him; and the Son of God, instead of being found in that way, will be seated on a throne of judgment, whence his wrath shall speedily begin to burn against all who have failed compliance with him. You have first set at naught the authority of the law; but this is a controversy that might still be settled. But if you now set at naught the grace of the gospel, this will be the consummation of your injuriousness toward God, and the breach between him and you will be wholly irreparable. You first took from him the tables of a holy commandment, and these to your own condemnation, you have broken. He then stretched forward the olive branch of forgiveness; and you, by your unconcern, may now lay upon it the most degrading mockery. It is this which gives the force and the operation of a two-edged sword to the preaching of the gospel; and, while the savor of life unto life to all who will, it is this which makes it the savor of death unto death to all who will not. In proportion as the unrelenting sinner is plied now with the looks and the language of tenderness, will he have to brook then the glances of a fiery indignation; and that grace which were sufficient here to efface the whole guilt wherewith his nature is so deeply and inveterately tainted, will, if turned away from, but aggravate there the reproach and the reckoning of a God of vengeance.

You may now see how it is that the law and the gospel, instead of thwarting or obliterating each other in the exercise of their respective functions, reflect on the provinces of both the greatest possible force of illustration. In looking towards them, we may say with the apostle, behold then the goodness and the severity of God; and, instead of these in a state of conflict, each, by every new exercise, strengthening that wall of demarcation by which the territory of the other is guarded from all violence. Should a sinner, pursued by the terrors of the one, take refuge among the promises of the other—he does not therefore defraud the law of its challengeable rights; but renders to it, in fact, the greatest possible homage, by bowing unto him, who, in honor of the law, bowed down his head unto the sacrifice. Or, if the sinner stand out in defiance to the threat of the law, and be alike indifferent to the promise of the gospel—then does the latter still leave him in the hands of the former. The gospel does not strip the law of a single prerogative; and, instead of harboring the renegado who would trample upon both, the rejected mercy of the one unites with the incensed justice of the other, in giving tenfold force to the penalties of a broken commandment.

But nature is alike blind to the reality of both. In the gospel, it takes no delight; and, from the law, it finds no disturbance. The voice of remorse, and the voice of mercy, are alike unheeded. The open gates of hell and of heaven, which lie on the other side of death, are hidden, as if by an impalpable screen, from the eye of the senses; and with every man who is still unawakened, they are equally hidden from his spiritual eye. One might conceive, that, by a partial unfolding of the screen, the way which leadeth from this world to the place of the accursed opened first on the view of the beholder; and then should we witness conscious guilt in its state of remorse and restlessness and alarm—till the screen had been further unfolded; and the way that leadeth to the place of the redeemed, floating with the signals of invitation, and announcing itself to be accessible to all, stood revealed to the eye of the earthly traveler. And this is a process that is oft exemplified on those, who are called out of darkness into marvellous light. But often, too, the intercepting veil is at once lifted away; and both the danger and the deliverance are made palpable alike to the soul, now ushered for the first time into a scene of manifestation; and no sooner are the thunders of an outraged law heard by the spiritual ear, than are heard along with it the glad tidings and assurances of the gospel; and, with both in your full contemplation at once, might you be urged to a choice between the death and the life that are set forth evidently before you. They are both placed beside each other in the text, which suggests to the reader, at one and the same time, the greatness of the ruin, and the greatness of the deliverance therefrom. It makes a dread of the one, the instrument for shutting up unto the other; and urges the alternative of the coming wrath, as the reason on which we ought to flee to the hope set before us in the gospel. For how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

And it is observable, that the purpose for which the greatness of the salvation is here argued, is to vindicate a heavier doom on all those who shall live and die in the negligence thereof. After such an offer being rejected, their blood remaineth on their own heads. God wipeth his hands of them; and what more, may he well say, could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done for it? Had there been no way of escape pointed out to you, it might not have been so easy to answer the complaints of the sinner against God. But now that a way at once so palpable and so free has been provided, and provided too for all under the economy of the gospel—when, in lack of all righteousness of his own, the righteousness of Christ is held out even to the chief of sinners, that he may put it on and appear before God invested in its honors and crowned with its everlasting rewards—when invited, as he most truly and tenderly is, to wash out his guilt in the blood of a satisfying atonement; and delivered at once from the fear and the shame of an accusing conscience, to walk in the land of the living with the erect confidence of him who never had offended—when plied with the demonstrations of a father's love, that hath been made to beam upon the world from a Savior's countenance, and to descend upon it in softest utterance from a Savior's lips—when the oath, and the protestation, and the assurance of welcome and goodwill, and the widely-sounding call of Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth and be saved; when these are hung out to view in the indelible record of God's own testimony—when he hath thus embarked, and in the sight too of men and of angels, the credit of his honesty, on the fulfillment of the promise, that, if you will but close with Christ and accept of him as he is offered to you in the gospel, you will receive along with him an unfailing protection upon earth and a blissful eternity in heaven—when things of mighty import as these are rung from Sabbath to Sabbath in your hearing; and every day of the week solicit your notice, through Bibles or ministers or the various remembrancers of him who hath not left himself without a witness in the world—O tell us how you can pass through the ordeal of the coming judgment, if it shall be found, that, deaf and listless and willful in the midst of all

these encouragements, you still would grovel in the depths of your own sin and your own sordidness—moved by no terror in the threats of vengeance, and by no allurement in the offered friendship of God.

And what is it that makes you feel so reckless and so bravely independent? Do you really think yourselves in a state which it will do to die in? Would no misgiving sense of unpreparedness come over your heart, did you but once find yourselves in good earnest on the margin of eternity? Can you seriously imagine of God's law, that its honors can be compromised—or of God himself, that he can be mocked with impunity by a creature who his whole life long has turned him to his own way? Tell us, honestly, whether the peace of your now deep and settled unconcern, is that of a man who has blinked the question of his eternity, and so left it unresolved—or that of a man who has sifted and scrutinized it in all its bearings, and at length placed it on the footing that will rightly uphold him in security through life, and keep him firm and undismayed under the agonies of his death-bed? What! can you lay your hand upon your heart, and say that there is nothing there which might well make the death and the judgment and the eternity to be thoughts of fearfulness; or bold in the sense of your integrity, could you now stand the reckoning of a holy God without a gospel and without a Savior? Are you not aware of sin, that it has deranged the whole of the relationship between you and God; and is it not true that this is the strong though secret jealousy under which you would fain escape the contemplation of his presence or tremble at the thought of him as of an enemy who was armed to destroy you? And whether is it for him the offended party, or for you the offender, to find out the adjustment of this sore controversy; and to dictate the terms and the treaty of reconciliation? Or, should he, in pity to our fallen world, stoop from the heights of his affronted majesty, and again beckon to his own realms of love and of purity its hapless wanderers—tell me is it for you to quarrel with that path of access which he has prescribed, or strong in the testimony of an unappalled conscience, to say that you want no salvation and stand in need of no mediatorship.

But we cannot think of any here present, that, with minds thus made up, they can bid their whole-hearted defiance to the invitations of the gospel. They do know that all is not right about them. They do feel that many are the Bible texts which look hard at them. They are aware of God as a Lawgiver; and how it is that he can both be just and a Savior, is a knot of difficulty in their minds, which, till resolved, leaves the question of their eternity at abeyance. There is the impression of a barrier between him who sitteth on the throne and their own persons, which to them at least is insuperable. And perhaps at one time or other, the thought may have come over their hearts—what a mighty enlargement were this barrier done away and the sore burden of this heavy and helpless alienation were disposed of, and all remembrance of our sins were expunged for ever, and the gate of a secure and blissful Heaven were open to receive us, and we heard the shouts of welcome gratulation on bending our footsteps thitherward. What a contrast to the things and the influences which are now around us, could we find it only thus—and we, in full and confident march to immortality, knew the Saviour to be our friend, and God to be rejoicing over us. Well then my brethren; and is this the translation into a state of betterness that your fancy ever dwelt upon, and has longed to realize? This thing on which you are so intensely set, is the very thing that the gospel hath spread out before you. By what mistake is it, that you and the gospel of Jesus Christ have not found their way to each other sooner? What you so vehemently wish, he hath accomplished. His right arm hath brought for you the whole of this salvation; and now it is finished, and lies ready at this moment for your acceptance. Why stand you thus in vain and fruitless aspirations, after a matter that is already secured—

and which now you are simply invited to lay hold of? Grant that you are a sinner above all the sinners on the face of the earth—still the blood of Christ overmatches the virulence of your guilt; and the open path of access that he has consecrated, you also are welcome to walk upon; and God who waiteth to be gracious, only waiteth for your trust in his mercy through the atonement of the cross, that he may treat you mercifully. And even now may you strike an agreement with the God whom you have offended; and make a final escape from all future vengeance, and from all your present forebodings, by fleeing for refuge unto Christ Jesus and laying hold of his great salvation.

PAST FEELING.

THEO. L. CUYLER.

Past feeling.—Eph. iv: 19.

A little boy is playing by his mother's side. Naturally he is not unfeeling. He is not insensible to generous sentiments. When a rude act wounds his parent's heart, he is smitten with genuine compunction. When he sees an object of distress, he is touched by it. He may, perhaps, give up his spending-money to relieve a beggar; or weep in sorrow for an unguarded blow given to a schoolmate. His heart has some flesh in it. The little fellow has *tears* in his composition; he knows what it is to feel.

Years roll on. His situation changes; and he changes with it. Watchful parents die, or else he is removed far from them. He falls under evil influences. Wicked companions gather about him—restraint slowly decays like a rotting rope—he breaks loose into sin. The calamity befalls him which befell the traveler from Jerusalem to Jericho. He "falls among thieves" who do worse than rob him of his purse; they rob him of decency, of self-respect, of all reverence for the pure, the honest, the lofty, the sacred, the holy. He grows reckless, and launches his depravity out on the open sea—literally spreading sail for perdition. When on shore he drinks hard, but feels not compunction. His oaths are exploded with a gusto, as if he loved to blaspheme. All regard for man, all fear of God wears away from his heart. His soul begins to petrify. The flesh turns to stone. At length he is ripe for anything.

In an evil hour he plans a mutiny on board the ship, and with his own hand strikes down the officer of the deck, and heaves his crimson corpse out into the sea as coolly as he would throw over a dog! Years pass by—dark, desperate years of rapine and of blood. At length his pirate-cruiser is captured, and he is brought on shore in irons. His soul is in irons too. They try him, they condemn him, they sentence him. But through it all he is perfectly unmoved. They drag him to his cell. He spends the last night before his execution in that living tomb—and *sleeps!* He ascends the fatal scaffold, as callous as a rock. No words of tender exhortation and entreaty from the chaplain by his side can melt him for a moment. His face indicates nothing but the sullen, obstinate hardihood of despair. That adamantine heart—that heart once tender, once alive to generous feeling, once soft enough for tears of contrition—that heart is now *past feeling!* It once could feel; nay, it did feel. It feels no longer.

Shame crimsons no longer that brazen countenance; the dread of death moves not a muscle of that rigid face; the horrors of hell call forth no last cry for "mercy," as he swings out into his terrible eternity! He dies as he lived; and among the nettles on his shunned and solitary grave we would plant a stone—not of respect, but of warning—and write on it God's solemn sentence, "*Past Feeling.*"

Now such appalling cases as this I have described are not imaginary. They are extreme cases, I admit. They are about as bad as earth can furnish, or fiends can delight to look upon. We have ourselves seen cases very much like them. The gambler, who sits glued to his roulette-table till the morning sun looks in to reproach him—the burglar, who after years of prison experience still plots his deeds of darkness —the poor outcast child of shame, who vents her vileness on the evening air as she passes us in the streets—the ruffian, who makes merchandise of human sinews and human souls—all these are but melancholy spectacles for men to shudder at, and for pitying angels to weep over. They are the terrific examples of what human depravity can work out when man is simply given up *to himself*. They illustrate fully the callousness of the heart when it has become *past feeling*—feeling for friends, feeling for reputation, feeling for God's word, feeling for life itself or for a dread hereafter.

It was to such persons—to those whom with a sad significance we style "abandoned" persons—that the apostle referred in the passage before us. He had just been exhorting the Ephesian church to purity of heart and life. As a warning, he points to the profligacy of heathenism about them. He makes a beacon of the godless Gentiles who "walked in the vanity of their mind," whose "understandings were darkened," who were alienated from the life of God. Those men had debauched their own moral sense. Their consciences were made drunk. They had given themselves over to the tyranny of lust to "work all uncleaness with greediness." Until at length they had become so insensible to their guilt, that Paul brands them with the fatal epithet, "*past feeling.*"

Now I do earnestly hope that this sense of my text is not, and never will be, applicable to any one in this assembly. I trust that on no brow here will ever be affixed a brand to which the guilty wearer shall be indifferent—a brand seen and read of all men, except the man himself. If God shall lengthen out my life among you, may I never behold the harrowing spectacle of any young man in this audience so sunk, so dead to all regard for himself, regard for society, regard for the God of Heaven, that he shall not even feel a glow of shame upon his cheek when he meets the mother who bore him, or the pastor who tried to save him. Never, never come that day when any of you, my beloved young friends, shall have become so *dead* to the claims of God and the voice of conscience, that having grown "past feeling," we must be constrained to abandon you as past all hope!

There is, however, a sense in which the solemn words of my text may apply to some of you. I fear it will yet apply. Perhaps it does already. I refer to that *insensibility to religious truth* which marks those who have often grieved the Holy Spirit. This is a most tremendous calamity. It is all the worse from the fact that its victim is insensible to his own insensibility. He does not feel how fearful it is *not to feel.* There are many here whom I could startle at once by telling them, on good medical authority, that a deadly disease was beginning its stealthy work upon their frames; or if I should tell them that a burglar had designs upon their house and life to-night, or that a treacherous friend would betray the secret tomorrow which shall blast their character. But when I come and tell you plainly that you are in danger of being *lost forever,* you scarcely open your ears to listen. What care you for it? "What's that to me."

My impenitent friend! it has not been *always* so with you. Open the leaves

or your heart's diary. Recall your past. Bring up memory to the witness-box. She will remind you of a time when your conscience was tender, and sensitive to gospel influence. As the words of warning sounded from a pastor's lips, on some past Sabbath, you listened to them, and listened with solemn awe. The truth fell like the small rain on the tender herb. You were melted. You were subdued. You were struck through with conviction of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It was your own sin that haunted you. The spectre would not

"Down at your bidding!"

You were sore troubled. You wept. With red eyes, and the tear still undried upon your cheek, you left the sanctuary. The trifling of the triflers, as they came out of church to laugh, to gossip, or to criticise, astonished you, and grieved you. Feeling so much yourself, you wondered how they could be so apparently "past feeling." Perhaps you prayed, and for a time went "softly." Your long closed Bible was opened. Some faithful friend was sought for religious counsel. And all that time the infinite Spirit of God was striving with you. Have you ever thought of the magnitude and the wonderful mercy of that phrase, *"striving?"* Just think of it. God striving with a sinner! It bespeaks strait and struggle. It bespeaks the anxiety of God himself to save his own wicked child. It is as if the ineffable Redeemer went down upon his knees before the willful, disobedient one, and *besought* him not to commit the eternal suicide!

So the divine Spirit strove with you. And under those strong pressures of truth, and uprisings of conscience and wooings of the Holy Ghost, you were "almost persuaded" to become a Christian. But alas! how is it with you now? Do you feel tonight as you felt then? Does the word *sin* smite you as then? Does the word *hell* strike you through with dread? Does the word *duty* arouse you as then? Does the mention of that blessed word "Savior" stir the fount of tears within you, as it used to do in those days gone by? Can you weep now as you wept then? Can you pray as you prayed then? Or on the other hand, do you not regard the very appeal I am making now to you, as a merely professional thing that I am employed to make twice every week, and in which you have no personal concern? Have you deliberately made up your mind, that in spite of warnings and entreaties, that through sick chambers and dying beds, and yawning graves, that over the very cross of Jesus, planted in your guilty path, you will press your way onward to the gates of hell?

Then I do not say that you are *"past* feeling." I dare not say that. God only knows your future. But most frankly and solemnly, I declare to you, that there *have been* cases in which men have so steeled themselves against conviction, that they were left, like "Lot's wife," monuments of wrath! I do not know that this is your case; but I fear it. I cannot bear to write this awful epitaph over your soul, dead in its trespasses and sin—*"Past Feeling."* The very thought is a dagger to my soul. Is that a dreadful moment to you, in which you are compelled to enter the chamber of a sick friend, and break to him the fatal truth, that his physician has given him up as past recovery? You would give your right hand to avoid that duty, but fidelity requires it. And I should be an unfaithful watchman for souls, if I did not proclaim tonight, my fears, that there are some now here, who have grieved away God's Spirit forever, and have already passed

———"that mysterious bourne,
By which our path is crossed,
Beyond which God himself has sworn,
That he who goes is lost!"

Occasionally a person is found who will frankly confess his total insensibility to all that is most precious to a saint, to all that is most startling to a sinner. A faithful pastor in a neighboring State, relates an instance so important, as a proof of our position, that I shall introduce it, in spite of certain antiquated prejudices against personal narratives in the pulpit. My Bible is full of personal history; and I am never afraid to introduce an anecdote, or relate an incident which makes a page in the great book of God's providence.

"I once entered a farm-house," said a pastor, "on a chilly November evening, and spent an hour in personal religious conversation with its inmates. The aged father of the family—a most kind and amiable man—followed me to the door, and stopped me on the porch. He took me by the hand, and most deliberately said: 'I thank you for this visit, and hope it will not be the last. As you have just commenced your labors among us, I wish to give you a word of advice, based on my own experience. *Let us old people alone,* and devote your labors to the youth of your flock. Forty years ago, I was greatly anxious about my soul; many were then converted, but I was not one of them. During the ministry of Mr. M——, many more were converted, but I was not one of them. And now for years, I have not *had a single feeling* on the subject! I know that I am a lost sinner; I know that I can only be saved through Jesus Christ; I feel persuaded that when I die, *I am lost!* I believe all you preach, but feel it no more than if I were a block of marble. I expect to live and die just as I am. So leave us to ourselves, and our sins, and give your strength to the work of saving the young.'

"I remembered that incident, and watched the progress of that man. His seat was rarely vacant in the sanctuary; but he was a true prophet of his own fate. He lived as he predicted; and so he died. We laid him down at last in his hopeless grave, in the midst of a congregation over whom God had so often opened windows in heaven." He was joined to his idols; God let him alone!

I would fain leave you, my hearers, to withdraw with the tremulous tones of that old man's voice, still ringing in your ears. I would prefer that you should go home to ponder the honest confession and the fate of one who was "past feeling" anything but his own indifference. Yet I cannot dismiss you without a few words of affectionate counsel to those who are not "past feeling"—who feel now—who cannot but feel under the touch of God's Spirit. Yonder anxious faces are the dial-plates of anxious hearts. In this silent, hushed assembly, we seem to overhear the very throb of those hearts, palpitating with the great question—"what shall I do to be saved?"

My friend! bear away with you from this house four solemn practical suggestions drawn from the text before us.

I. You feel now; but *do not be content with mere feeling.* Tears never saved a sinner; hell is vocal with the wails of the weepers. *Faith is better than feeling.* Your Bible does not say—feel and be saved. It says, "Believe and be saved." And faith is not enough without action. "The devils believe." There are no atheists in the dungeons of the damned. But lost spirits do not love God, do not *obey* him. You must obey as well as believe. Act out your feelings. Obey God in self-denying duty. Crystallize your feeling into faith, and prove your faith by your works. "Faith without works is dead." Faith in Jesus is the invisible *root* of religion concealed within the soul; but deeds of holy duty are the glorious outgrowth with stalwart trunk, and branches broad, and luxuriant masses of foliage lifted into the airs of heaven. And amid these goodly boughs are found the *fruits* of godliness shining—as quaint Andrew Marvell said of the Bermuda oranges—

"Like golden lamps in a deep green night."

Aim immediately at fruits. Begin to-night to serve God from principle. Go home

and set up your altar. Lay hold of work; the harder it is the better. Paul struck the key-note of his whole religious life when in the gush of his first feeling he cried out. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?*"

II. My second suggestion is, that what you do, you must *do quickly,* for you cannot long remain as you are. For a few brief days in May, the orchards are white with blossoms. They soon turn to fruit, or else float away useless and wasted upon the idle breeze. It will be so with your present feelings. They must be deepened into decision, or be entirely dissipated by delay. You must advance, or be lost. As the result of your present seriousness, you will either become a true child of God, or else a more hardened and unfeeling child of wrath. Dread (as you would dread death itself) the very idea of relapsing into indifference. Cherish conviction. Take your fears to the mercy-seat, and beseech your compassionate Savior not to permit your awakened soul ever to become "past feeling."

III. My third suggestion is a brief caution. Do not compare your own feelings with those of other people, or allow yourself to be discouraged because you have not the intense griefs or the lively joys of which they speak. God does not command you to feel like this one or like that. He bids you *repent and believe;* you are to conform to his word and not to your neighbors' varying frames and feelings.

The Holy Spirit deals with no two hearts precisely alike. He opens some hearts by the gentlest touch of love; others he seems to wrench open as with the iron-bar of alarming judgments. Spurgeon happily remarks: "When the lofty palm-tree of Zeilan puts forth its flower, the sheath bursts with a report that shakes the forest; but thousands of other flowers of equal value open in the morning, and the very dewdrops hear no sound; even so many souls do blossom in mercy, and the world hears neither whirlwind nor tempest." Do not question the rightfulness of your own heart-exercises because no one else has had any precisely similar. God will not bear dictation. He is a Sovereign. He will save you just as he chooses. Be thankful that you can be saved at all. See to it that you do not cavil and question and tamper until the Holy Spirit abandon you to become "past feeling."

IV. Finally, let me remind you that in the eternal world no one can be indifferent, no one shall be insensible. Neither in heaven nor in hell can you ever become "past feeling."

The home of the ransomed is a home of rapture. Heaven is alive with emotion. Every heart throbs, every eye kindles, every tongue is praising, every finger strikes a harp-string. Listen with the ear of faith, and you can hear the distant oratorios of the blessed as they swell up in melodies seraphic and celestial! Look yonder with faith's clear eye, and you will see the mighty multitudes before the throne. You will behold the flashing shower of golden crowns flung before the feet of one majestic being. You will catch one outburst of melody. The burden of the strain will be "unto him that loved us, and washed us in his blood, be the praise and the dominion forever!" No mortal's name shall be heard of then. Paul shall be lost sight of in the glory of Paul's Redeemer. Luther will be unseen amid the worship of Luther's Reformer. John Calvin shall sing, *None but Christ!* And John Wesley shall shout back, *None but Christ!* With one heart and one voice they all roll high the magnificent acclaim: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor, and power, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever!"

The world of darkness will be a world of feeling too. "There shall be weeping" there. Not tears of penitence, but tears of despair. The worm shall never die. There will be a fire unquenchable in every sinner's heart that will burn like a seven-times heated furnace. The debauchee will be gnawed by his appetite for sensualities that never can be gratified. The poor drunkard will be possessed with a passion for the poison-bowl, but will find not a single drop to slake the undying thirst. The

covetous spirit will writhe in its own selfishness; and the skeptic will be tormented with the constant sight of a Jehovah whom he once denied, and of a heaven which he closed against himself. *"Ye knew your duty and ye did it not,"* will blaze in lurid flame on every wall of that dark prison-house!

Conscience will be fearfully busy then—busy in pointing to the visions of a Savior offered and a Savior despised—busy in recalling mercies once contemned, and precious invitations trampled under foot. Dying friend! You may smother conscience here. You may drown serious thought. You may gag your moral sense. But that smothered conscience will rise again. It will arise in the dying hour, startled from slumber by the crash of dissolving humanity. It will awake to new life on that dread morn when the Archangel's trump shall sound. It will be alive with an intensity of torment on that day when the "books are opened;" and it will live amid the agonies of perdition *never again to become past feeling!*

[Dr. Cuyler said that his only reason for consenting to the publication of this discourse was found in the simple fact that God had been pleased to bless its plain, unadorned truths to the conversion of several souls during the New York revival.]

"LET ME ALONE!" OR, THE GREAT GOD IN THE HANDS OF A MAN.

THEODORE CHRISTLIEB.

Exod. xxxii: 7-14.

Have you never seen a father take his little son upon his knee, play with him, pretend to let the child get the mastery over him, allow him perhaps to tie his hands, appear as if he were entirely in his power, so that the boy begins to triumph at his supposed victory?

Such a scene was brought to my mind by a short sentence of our text, some of the most remarkable words in the whole sacred writings, on the greatness, depth, and beauty of which I linger as I read them, and cannot tear myself away. I mean the words, "Let me alone." God, in his wrath, about to destroy his unfaithful people, says to Moses: "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." What an expression! "Let me alone." The Almighty God gives himself up into Moses' hands. He allows himself to be bound, as it were, hand and foot by his own creature, a weak man, and must now beg and pray, "Let me alone." As if God might not, could not act without the permission of Moses! Let me alone! See here a father bound by his child, not in play, but in holy earnest. The child holds him as fast, will not let him go, will not even grant his prayer, "Let me go," but holds him all the faster, until the father does what the child wants. Oh! what a marvel is this!

The Holy Scriptures tell us of many a conflict in which the weaker gains the victory over the stronger, as David over Goliath, the poor widow over the unjust judge, and others; but what are those in comparison with the wrestling to which our

text of today directs our attention? Here we have a man laying hold of the Lord God himself in faith, in love for his fellow men, struggling with him, overcoming him, holding him fast, so that the Holy God exclaims: "Let me alone!" and even then Moses will not let God go, but compels him to what he, the man, pleases.

The patriarch Jacob once wrestled victoriously with God, and cried: "I will not let Thee go" (Gen. xxxii. 26), nor did he let him go until his petition was granted. Oh, what words are those! We know not whether to wonder more at the boldness and power of faith of these men, or at the condescending grace of God; at God's request, or at Moses' answer; at the wonderful struggle, or at its remarkable issue.

Let it be to us a real delight, a precious enjoyment, to linger on these words, and to be permitted to witness such a scene. And God grant that we may be urged on to wrestle with him ourselves more often, more earnestly, more boldly, to prevail against him in faith after considering these words:

"Let me alone!" The great God in the hands of a man!

We shall direct our attention:

I. To *God's request,* or the condescension with which God gives himself up into the hands of a man.

II. To *Moses' reply, or the faith which lays hold of God and prevails against him.*

III. *To the issue of the struggle,* or *the victory of God in the victory of man.*

O Lord God! We are amazed at thy condescension, unable as we are to understand it. We have not believed in thy great favor towards us. Forgive us this; forgive us that we know so little of thee in all thy love to us, that we make so little use of thy goodness and kindness so far above our comprehension! Oh, help us, encourage us to know more of thee, and in order that we may learn to prevail with thee, do thou prevail first with us, and overcome everything within us that is contrary to thy will. Oh, do thou first gain the victory over us, and grant that we may then gain the victory over thee!—Amen.

"And the Lord said to Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy Gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

What news for Moses, who had just received the two tables of the law from the hand of God! Thy people have corrupted themselves; all that I have spoken with thee, all my wonderful works and my guidance have been in vain. They recognize me no longer as their Savior; they have cast me off. And with these words he gives Moses to understand, "therefore have I also cast them off." So utterly, in fact, is the bond between God and his people severed, that God no longer acknowledges them as his people, but says, *"Thy* people, which *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt;" that he cares not to remember anything that he has done for the people, but speaks of it as of something quite outside of himself.

Oh, what a crushing *thy,* what a heart-rending *thou!*

We behold Moses standing alone before the Holy God, forsaken by his people, and his people forsaken by God. He feels as if the whole burden of the sin of his people were being laid upon *his* shoulders with this *thy* and this *thou,* and he sees at this moment nothing but the abyss of Divine wrath before him. Cast down, terror-stricken, not knowing which way to turn, overcome by fear and grief, he is silent before God. Then God comes to his aid, and without any reply from Moses begins anew: *"I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let me*

alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation!" "Let me alone!" God exclaims, and gives Moses to understand by this one word the enormous power he (Moses) has over him; he says, as it were: "There is yet a barrier between my wrath and thy people; the fiery stream of my justice is arrested in its course by a plank before the flood gate. Thou art this barrier. Thou, thy heart, is this plank, thy heart, which begins to cry for mercy, although thy mouth is as yet dumb. Let me alone, remove this barrier out of my way, let my wrath have its course; thine inward crying binds me fast; as long as it continues, I can do nothing." At these words the dazzling height on which Moses stood becomes clear to him; he begins to feel, all is not yet lost. God is still prevented, still held back, bound fast; and it is I, my lisping and stammering tongue, that hinder him; it is in my power to let him go, or to hold him back; the great God is in my hands!

What gracious condescension of God to beg, "Let me alone!" what condescension to say to Moses that he is in his power. Without it Moses never would have known whom he had in his hands. What condescension, to raise a creature so high that he makes the discovery, "It is in my power whether or not God's righteous chastisement shall have its course." Is not this an astonishing thought; the great God in the hands of a man, and moreover, in the very moment of God's appearing in all his terror, in the zeal of his wrath!

The Lord of heaven and earth, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands (Acts xvii. 27), whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, before whose majesty the cherubim veil their faces in deepest reverence, is in the power of a man; he stoops so low as to place the control of his actions in the hands of a man!

Do you say, This is incredible? Let me place before you another scene. Go with me from the desert of Sinai to the land of Caanan. I will lead you into a little town, and take you through its streets, past all the houses, till at last we come to a lowly stable, into which we enter. There, in a corner on a heap of straw, sits a handmaid of the Lord, and an infant slumbers on her lap. What does this picture say to you? Nothing short of this: The great God, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead, in the hands of a human creature! and here, not in the hands of a strong man, but of a weak woman—a virgin. What condescension!

Can you not yet believe it? Let me show you another picture. We will step into the spacious hall of a palace in Jerusalem, and behold there assembled the chief priests and elders, and all the council of the Jews. Their countenances appear to us sinister and fanatical; round about are soldiers and servants. In the midst stands One bound, calm and silent, full of dignity in his mien. "What think ye?" asks he who presides, putting it to the vote, and the sentence is pronounced, "He is guilty of death." What does this scene tell us? what else but this: The great God in the hands of a man, and this time not of a faithful, believing prophet, not of a holy virgin, but in the hands of false prophets, of hardened, hypocritical sinners. What condescension!

Yet another picture. Behold this same pity-moving figure, with swollen face and wounded back, scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, great drops of blood upon his forehead, standing on "the Pavement" before the judgment-hall of the Roman prætor (governor), surrounded by Roman soldiers, whilst from the street comes a wild demoniacal shout, "Crucify him!" The judge goes up to the prisoner, and says with haughty mien, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" What does this scene say to us? What else does it preach but this, The great God in the hands of a man; and this time not in the hands of one of God's chosen people, but in the power of a heathen. What condescension!

And bear with me, I pray you, whilst I bring before you the last picture. See

a great company of people moving on towards a hill outside the city wall, the men mocking and blaspheming, the women weeping, the pale central figure carrying a cross and breaking down under its weight. Now they have gained the hill-top; the cross is laid on the ground, the figure is stretched upon it. Hark! what are those strokes of the hammer, amid which a voice breaks forth: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" They drive nails through the limbs, they pierce the hands and the feet; now the cross is raised up, and blood trickles down its beams. What does this scene say to us? what else does it preach but this: The great God in the hands of a man, and this time not of an Israelite, not of a cultured man in high office, but of an executioner. What condescension!

Soul, wilt thou now believe that the great God, in his infinite condescension, yields himself up into the hands of a man? Let not Jacob and Moses alone; let Mary's lap and Mary's arms; let every trace of the ill-treatment of the body of thy Lord and thy God; let every drop of blood that he shed say to thee: God, in his infinite, incomprehensible mercy and condescension, gave himself up into the hands of men! Redemption itself is nothing else than that God gave himself into our hands; that he, who was so far away from us, came nearer to us, enabled us to lay hold of him, to grasp him.

Reconciliation through His blood is nothing else but the free gift of himself into the hands of sinners, and into the power of darkness, in order to show us that he is our own, that his life, each drop of his blood, belongs to us, that we may possess himself. That which took place on Golgotha was the last and deepest act of the Divine drama, in which God yielded up himself into the hands of men.

It began on Sinai, when God gave himself into the hands of Moses; and whether God gave himself into the power of Moses, or the Son of God gave himself into the hands of Mary the virgin, or of the Jews, or of the heathen, it is one and the same condescension, the same Divine love, which leaves no sigh unnoticed, which lets its arms be bound by human tears and sighs, and which finally lets hands and feet be pierced because it can no longer behold the misery of mankind; which lets itself be bound, even unto death, so that it may step into the breach between the sinful, covenant-breaking world and the wrath of God, and once for all obtain mercy and peace for a fallen race "through the blood of his cross."

II.

We have seen the condescension of God in giving himself into the hands of a man, but how can a man lay hold of him whom the heavens cannot contain?

It is faith that lays hold of God, and prevails against him. Moses' reply to God's request shows us this.

"Let me alone," exclaims God; "give place to my wrath." And Moses answers like Jacob, "I will not let thee go." What manner of man is this who so directly refuses a request of the Almighty? "But Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, *"Lord why doth thy wrath wax hot against THY people, which THOU hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt?"* See how the condescension of God gives him heart and courage to say No. Ah, thinks he, if that is the case, if the carrying out of thy wrathful judgments depends upon me, if thou art in my hands, I will make use of my power. Behold his faith; he does not despair, he clings to hope; confidence grows with the condescension of God; he is bold, he throws back to God his own words, *"Thy* people" (not mine) "which *Thou* hast led forth" (not I). He reminds God of his *merciful guidance* of his people hitherto; he denies, in fact, his request. See how hardly he presses God with this *Thou* and *Thy*. And as God listens to him, does not interrupt him (as God never does), does not bid him be silent, Moses becomes yet bolder, and begins to argue, *"Wherefore should the Egyptians*

speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, and slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" He reminds God of his own and Israel's enemies, who would triumph over the destruction of the people; he attacks God on the point of *honor,* and ventures to tell God what he ought to do, to beseech him thus: *"Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people."* And as God listens also to this he becomes still bolder, and attacks God now on the point of *faithfulness,* reminds him of his covenant with the patriarchs: *"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever."* And as Moses thus reminds God of his chosen servants, and of the covenant he made with them, he not only lays hold of God, but prevails against him and *overcomes him.* God exclaims, "Let me alone." Moses answers, "No," and God yields to the "No." What is it that seized hold of God and conquered? The answer is, Faith in God's mercy, in God's honor, in God's faithfulness! The words, *"I will make of thee a great nation,"* placed a severe temptation before Moses; the boast of being himself the ancestor of a great nation might have allured him; but no, he forgets himself for the sake of his people.

And what was it that laid hold of God when, in the fulness of time, the Son of God should be conceived and born? It was faith, which said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And what is it that lays hold of God today? for he gives himself into the hands of men today. When a man lays hold of God's chastening rod, crying, "Hold! spare me; be merciful! Think of what thou hast already done for me, think of thy child, Jesus; look on him, not on me. I take refuge in him." Is not that faith? faith which reminds God of his mercy, his guidance hitherto, his honor and his faithfulness, and lastly, of his holy child, Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; faith, which lays hold of the heart of God and pleads, "I pray in Christ's name; what I ask, Christ asks also. Thou hast never refused him anything, therefore thou must grant my prayer." Oh what a power is faith, which in the strength of Christ wrestles with God and overcomes him; which embraces God with "Abba," "Father," and cries out, "Thou *must* hear my prayer; I have thee and will hold thee; I will not let thee go." What a wonderful struggle! A man, a woman, a child, may lay hold of God in faith, and prevail against him. What a high destiny! Thou canst and shalt, like Moses, dictate to God what he shall do. "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. xxi. 22).

True, you will say, but that which laid hold of Jesus on Gabbatha and on Golgotha was not the hand of faith. Quite so, that was a cruel outward attack, but even in this case—

III.

The *issue of the struggle* showed that the victory of man is in reality only the victory of God, *i. e., God himself conquers in man's victory.* He carries out his own inmost thoughts. What was the issue of the struggle on Sinai? *"And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."* God is not a man that he should repent. This is merely a human way of speaking. God does not change his mind. He does what he had intended to do from the beginning. He manifests himself as the gracious and merciful God, full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great goodness and faithfulness. It is his earnest desire to spare the people, but he will not do it until a mediator appears. He will have prayer made to him, in order to forgive in answer to prayer. Therefore he gives Moses courage by his condescension. "Let me alone." He gives him courage not to let him go, but to continue begging for mercy; and as

Moses perseveres, God allows him to prevail, allows man to gain the victory. But in this victory it is God who is the victor; he carries out what he had intended to do from the beginning; he glorifies his abounding grace. It was the same with Jacob's victory. When Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed, it was God who conquered; the issue was as God would have it.

On Golgotha it appeared as if sinful men had prevailed, but it was God who thus accomplished his own eternal counsel. It was his love and mercy which triumphed. So also the victory of every soul who prevails with God in prayer is God's victory. The soul conquers in faith in the name and power of Christ; and just because of this struggling with God in faith and in the name of Christ, the soul becomes one with God through Christ, and asks only what is well-pleasing to God, what God is willing to give. Therefore, in granting the request, and in being prevailed against in prayer, God is celebrating his own victory. It is his longing desire to be thus prevailed against. Behold, ye children of God, to what high dignity you are called! In the covenant made by God with his people, and with you in baptism, his promise, "I will be to thee a Father, and thou shalt be to me a son," means that he will allow himself to be overcome; and in Christ Jesus he shows the way. He cannot be more condescending. He invites you to wrestle with him often. Every soul, entering into life eternal, has not only gained victory over the world, over death and hell, but also over God himself, who has heard his prayers, and in granting his petitions has gained his own greatest victory, the victory of his grace and mercy.

"Let me alone." Go home and underline those words. May they be a sign to remind you of this truth, *The great God in the hands of man.* There is many a "Let me." Are these words strange or new to you? Have you never heard the call, "Let me come in unto thee?" Let me take away thy stony heart; let me cleanse thee from sin. Oh, yield now, and let thyself be vanquished. But if the cry is, "Let me alone, that I may consume thee in my wrath," then yield not an inch, but conquer in faith through the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3; 21). Amen.

DIRECTIONS TO SINNERS.

CHARLES G. FINNEY.

What shall I do to be saved?—Acts xvi: 30.

These are the words of the jailer at Philippi, the question which he put to Paul and Silas, who were then under his care as prisoners. Satan had, in many ways, opposed these servants of God in their work of preaching the gospel, and had been as often defeated and disgraced. But here, at Philippi, he devised a new and peculiar project for frustrating their labors. There was a certain woman at Philippi, who was possessed with a spirit of divination, or in other words, the spirit of the devil, and brought her masters much gain by her sooth-saying. The devil set this woman to follow Paul and Silas about the streets, and as soon as they had begun to gain the attention of the people, she would come in and cry, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." That is, she undertook to second the exhortations of the preachers, and added her testimony, as if to give additional weight to their instructions. The effect of it was just what Satan desired. The people all knew that this was a wicked, base woman, and when they heard her attempting to recommend this new preaching, they were disgusted, and concluded it was all of a piece. The devil knew that it would not do him any good but would help their cause, to set such a person to oppose the preaching of the apostles, or to speak against it. The time had gone by, for that to succeed. And, therefore, he comes round the other way, and takes the opposite ground, and by setting her to praise them as the servants of God, and to bear her polluted testimony in favor of their instructions, he led people to suppose the apostles were of the same character with her, and had the same spirit that she had, and thus all their efforts were defeated. Paul saw that if things went on so, he should be totally baffled, and never succeed in establishing a church at Philippi. And he turns round to her, and commands the foul spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. When her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they raised a great persecution, and caught Paul and Silas, and made a great ado, and brought them before the magistrates, and raised such a clamor that the magistrates shut them up in prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Thus, they thought they had put down the excitement. But at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises, and the prisoners heard them. This old prison that had so long echoed to the voice of blasphemy and oaths, now resounded with the praises of God, and these walls, that had stood so firm, now trembled under the power of prayer. The stocks were unloosed, the gates thrown open, and every one's bands broken. The jailer was aroused from his sleep, and, when he saw the prison doors opened, as he knew that if the prisoners had escaped he must pay for it with his life, he drew his sword, and was about to kill himself. But Paul, who had no notion of escaping clandestinely, cried out to him instantly, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." And the jailer called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell

down before his prisoners, Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

In my last lecture, I dwelt at some length on the false instructions given to sinners under conviction, and the false comforts too often administered, and the erroneous instructions which such persons receive. It is my desire, tonight, to show *what are the instructions* that should be given to anxious sinners in order to their speedy and effectual conversion. Or, in other words, to explain to you, what answer should be given to those who make the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" In doing it, I propose,

I. To show *what is not a proper direction* to be given to sinners, when they make the inquiry in the text.

II. Show *what is a proper answer* to the inquiry. And,

III. To *specify several errors*, which anxious sinners are apt to fall into.

I. I am to show *what are not proper directions* to be given to anxious sinners.

No more important inquiry was ever made than this, "What must I do to be saved?" Mankind are apt enough to inquire "What shall I eat, and what shall I drink," and the question may be answered in various ways, with little danger. But when a sinner asks in earnest, "What must I do to be saved?" it is of infinite importance that he should receive the right answer. It is my desire, to-night, to tell you, professors of religion, what to answer to this inquiry, and to tell you, who are sinners, what you must do to be saved.

1. No direction should be given to a sinner, that *will leave him still in the gall of bitterness* and the bonds of iniquity. No answer is proper to be given, with which, if he complies, he would not go to heaven, if he should die the next moment.

2. No direction should be given, that does not include a change of heart, or a right heart, or hearty obedience to Christ. In other words, nothing is proper, which does not imply actually becoming a Christian. Any direction that falls short of this, is of no use. It will not bring him any nearer to the kingdom, it will do no good, but will only lead him to *defer the very thing* which he must do, in order to be saved. The sinner should be told plainly, at once, what he must do, or die; and he should be told nothing that does not include a right state of heart. Whatever you may do, sinner, that does not include a right heart, is sin. Whether you read the Bible or not, it is sin, so long as you remain in rebellion. Whether you go to meeting, or stay away, whether you pray or not, it is nothing but rebellion, every moment. It is surprising, that a sinner should suppose himself doing God's service, when he prays, and reads his Bible. Should a rebel against this government, read the statute book, while he continues in rebellion, and has no design to obey; should he ask for pardon, while he holds on to his weapons of resistance and warfare, would you think him doing his country a service, and laying them under obligations to show him favor? No, you would say that all his reading and praying, were only an insult to the majesty both of the lawgiver and the law. So you, sinner, while you remain in impenitence, are insulting God and setting him at defiance, whether you read his word and pray, or let it alone. No matter what place or what attitude your body is in, on your knees, or in the house of God, so long as your heart is not right, so long as you resist the Holy Ghost, and reject Christ, you are a rebel against your Maker.

II. I am to show *what is a proper* answer to this inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"

And, generally, you may give the sinner any direction, or tell him to do anything, that includes a right heart, and if you make him understand it, and do it, he will be saved. The Spirit of God, in striving with sinners, suits his strivings to the state

of mind in which he finds them. His great object in striving with them, is, to dislodge them from their hiding-places, and bring them to submit to God, at once. Now these objections, and difficulties, and states of mind, are as various as the circumstances of mankind, as many as there are individuals. The characters of individuals afford an endless diversity. What is to be done with each one, and how he is to be converted, depends on his particular errors. It is necessary to ascertain his errors, to find out what he understands, and what he needs to be taught more perfectly, to see what points the Spirit of God is pressing upon his conscience, and to press the same things and thus bring him to Christ. The most common directions are the following:

1. It is generally in point, and a safe and suitable direction to tell a sinner to *repent.* I say, *generally.* For sometimes the Spirit of God seems not so much to direct the sinner's attention to *his own sins* as to some other thing. In the days of the apostles, the minds of the people seem to have been agitated mainly on the question, whether Jesus was the true Messiah. And so the apostles directed much of their instructions to this point, to prove that he was the Christ. And whenever anxious sinners asked them what they must do, they most commonly exhorted them to "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." They bore down on this point, because here was where the Spirit of God was striving with them, and this was the subject that especially agitated people's minds, and, consequently, this would probably be the first thing a person would do on submitting to God. It was the grand point at issue between God and the Jew and Gentile of those days, whether Jesus Christ was the son of God. It was the point in dispute. To bring a sinner to yield this controverted question, was the way the most effectually to humble him.

At other times, it will be found, that the Spirit of God is dealing with sinners chiefly in reference to their own sins. Sometimes he deals with them in regard to a particular duty, as prayer, perhaps family prayer. The sinner will be found to be contesting that point with God, whether it is right for him to pray, or whether he ought to pray in his family. I have known striking cases of this kind, where the individual was struggling on this point, and as soon as he fell on his knees to pray, he yielded his heart, showing that this was the very point which the Spirit of God was contesting, and the hinge on which his controversy with God all turned. That was conversion.

The direction to repent is always *proper,* but will not always be effectual, for there may be some other thing that the sinner needs to be told also. And where it is the pertinent direction, sinners need not only to be told to repent, but to have it explained to them what repentance is. Since there has been so much mysticism, and false philosophy and false theology, thrown around the subject, it has become necessary to tell sinners not only what you mean by repentance, but also to tell them what you *do not* mean. Words that used to be plain and easily understood have now become so perverted that they need to be explained to sinners, or they will often convey a wrong impression to their minds. This is the case with the word repentance. Many suppose that *remorse,* or a sense of guilt, is repentance. Then hell is full of repentance, for it is full of remorse, unutterable and eternal. Others feel *regret* that they have done such a thing, and they call that repenting of it. But they only regret that they have sinned, because of the consequences, and not because they abhor sin. This is not repentance. Others suppose that convictions of sin and strong fears of hell are repentance. Others consider the remonstrances of conscience as repentance; they say, "I never do anything wrong but that I repent; that I always feel sorry I did it." Others regard repentance as a feeling of sorrow for sin. But repentance is not an involuntary feeling of any kind or degree. Sinners must be shown that all these things are not repentance. They are not only consistent with the utmost wickedness, but the devil might have them all, and doubtless has them all,

and yet remains a devil. Repentance is a change of mind, as regards God and toward sin itself. It is not only a change of views, but a change of the ultimate preference or choice of the soul. It is a voluntary change, and by consequence involves a change of *feeling* and of *action toward God and toward sin.* It is what is naturally understood by a change of mind on any subject of interest and importance. We hear that such a man has changed his mind on the subject of Abolition, for instance, or that he has changed his views in politics. Everybody understands that he has undergone a change in his views, his feelings, and his *conduct.* This is repentance, on that subject, it is a change of mind, but not towards God. Evangelical repentance is a change of willing, of feeling, *and of life, in respect to God.*

Repentance always implies abhorrence of sin. It is willing and feeling as God does in respect to sin. It of course involves the love of God, and an abhorrence of sin. It always implies forsaking sin. Sinners should be made to understand this. The sinner that repents does not feel as impenitent sinners think they should feel, at giving up their sins if they should become religious. Impenitent sinners look upon religion just like this, that if they become pious, they shall be *obliged* to stay away from balls and parties, and obliged to give up theatres, or gambling, or other things that they now take delight in. And they see not how they could ever enjoy themselves, if they should break off from all those things. But this is very far from being a correct view of the matter. Religion does not make them unhappy, by shutting them out from things in which they delight, because the first step in it is to repent, to change their mind in regard to all these things. They do not seem to realize that the person who has repented has no disposition for these things, he has given them up, and turned his mind away from them. Sinners feel as if they should *want* to go to such places, and want to mingle in such scenes, just as much as they do now, and that it will be such a continued sacrifice as to make them unhappy. This is a great mistake.

I know there are some professors who would be very glad to betake themselves to their former practices, were it not that they feel constrained, by fear of losing their character, or the like. Now, mark me. If they feel so, it is because they have no religion, they do not hate sin. If they desire their former ways, they have no religion, they have never repented, for repentance always consists in a change of choice of views and feelings. If they were really converted, instead of choosing such things, they would turn away from them with loathing. Instead of lusting after the flesh-pots of Egypt, and desiring to go into their former circles, parties, balls, and the like, they find their highest pleasure in obeying God.

2. Sinners should be told to *believe the* Gospel. Here, also, they need to have it explained to them, and to be told what *is not* faith and what is. Nothing is more common than for a sinner, when told to believe the Gospel, to say, "I do believe it." The fact is, he has been brought up to admit the fact, that the Gospel is true, but he does not *believe* it, he knows nothing about the evidence of it, and all his faith is a mere admission without evidence. He holds it to be true, in a kind of loose, indefinite sense, so that he is always ready to say, "I do believe the Bible." It is strange they do not see that they are deceived in thinking that they believe, for they must see that they have never acted upon these truths, as they do upon those things that they do believe. Yet it is often quite difficult to convince them that they do not believe.

But the fact is, that the careless sinner does not believe the Gospel at all. The idea that the careless sinner is an *intellectual* believer is absurd. The devil is an intellectual believer, and that is what makes him tremble. What makes a sinner anxious is, that he begins to be an intellectual believer, and that makes him feel. No being in heaven, earth, or hell, can intellectually believe the truths of the Gospel

and not feel on the subject. The anxious sinner has faith of the same kind with devils, but he has not so much of it, and therefore, he does not feel so much. The man that does not feel nor act at all, on the subject of religion is an infidel, let his professions be what they may. He that feels nothing, and does nothing, believes nothing. This is a philosophical fact.

Faith does not consist in an intellectual conviction that Christ died for you in particular, nor in a belief that you are a Christian, or that you ever shall be, or that your sins are forgiven. But faith is that trust or confidence in God, and in Christ, that commits the whole soul to him in all his relations to us. It is a voluntary trust in his person, his veracity, his word. This was the faith of Abraham. He had that confidence in what God said, which led him to act as if it were true. This is the way the apostle illustrates it in the eleventh of Hebrews. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And he goes on to illustrate it by various examples. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were made," that is, we believe this, and act accordingly. Take the case of Noah. Noah was warned of God of things not seen as yet, that is, he was assured that God was going to drown the world, and he believed it and acted accordingly; he prepared an ark to save his family, and by so doing, he condemned the world that would not believe; his actions gave evidence that he was sincere. Abraham, too, was called of God to leave his country, with the promise that he should be the gainer by it, and he obeyed and went out, without knowing where he should go. Read the whole chapter and you will find many instances of the same kind. The whole design of the chapter is to illustrate the nature of faith, and to show that it invariably results in action. The sinner should have it explained to him, and be *made to see* that the faith which the Gospel requires is just that confidence in Christ which leads him to act on what he says as a certain fact. This is believing in Christ.

3. Another direction proper to be given to the sinner is that he should *give his heart to God.* God says, "My son, give me thine heart." But here also there needs to be explanation, to make him understand what it is. It is amazing that there should be any darkness here. It is the language of common life, in everybody's mouth, and everybody understands just what it means, when we use it in regard to anything else. But when it comes to religion, they seem to be all in the dark. Ask a sinner, no matter what may be his age, or education, what it means to give the heart to God, and, strange as it may appear, he is at a loss for an answer. Ask a woman what it is to give her heart to her husband, or a man what it is to give his heart to his wife, and they understand it. But then they are totally blind as to giving their hearts to God. I suppose I have asked more than a thousand anxious sinners this question. When I have told them they must give their hearts to God, they would always say they were willing to do it, and, sometimes, that they were anxious to do it, and even seem to be in an agony of desire about it. Then I have asked them what they understood to be giving their hearts to God, as they were so willing to do it. And very seldom have I received a correct or rational answer from a sinner of any age. I have sometimes had the strangest answers that can be imagined—anything but what they ought to say. Now, to give your heart to God is the same thing as to give your heart to anybody else; the same as for a woman to give her heart to her husband. Ask that woman if she understands this? "Oh, yes, that is plain enough, it is to place my affections on him, and strive to please him in everything." Very well, place your affections on God, and strive to please him in everything. But alas, when they come to the subject of religion, people suppose there is some wonderful mystery about it. Some talk as if they supposed it was to take this bundle of muscles, or fleshy organ, in their bosom, and give it to God. Sinner, what God asks of you is that you should love him supremely.

3. *Submit to God,* is also a proper direction to anxious sinners. And, oh, how dark sinners are here too! Scarcely a sinner can be found, who will not tell you he is willing to submit to God. But they do not understand it. They need to be told what true submission is. Sometimes they think it means that they should be willing to be damned. Sometimes they place themselves in this attitude, and call it submission; they say, if they are elected, they shall be saved, and if not, they shall be damned. This is not submission. True submission, is yielding obedience to God. Suppose a rebel, in arms against the government, was called on to submit. What would he understand by it? Why, that he should yield the point, and lay down his arms, and obey the laws. That is just what it means, for a sinner to submit to God. He must cease his strife and conflict against his Maker, and take the attitude of a willing and obedient child, willing to be and do whatever God requires. "Here, Lord, am I; Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"

Suppose a company of soldiers had rebelled, and Government had raised an army to put them down, and had driven them into a stronghold, where they were out of provisions, and had no way to escape, and they should not know what to do. Suppose the rebels to have met in this extremity, to consider what is to be done? and one rises up, and says, "Well, comrades, I am convinced we are all wrong from the beginning, and now the reward of our deeds is like to overtake us, and we cannot escape, and as for remaining here to die, I am resolved not to do it, I am going to throw myself on the mercy of the commander-in-chief." That man submits. He ceases, from that moment, to be a rebel in his heart, just as soon as he comes to this conclusion. So it is with the sinner when he yields the point, and consents in his heart to do, and be, whatever God shall require. The sinner may be in doubt what to do, and may feel afraid to put himself in God's hands, thinking that if he does, perhaps God will send him down to hell, as he deserves. But it is his business to leave all that question with God, and not resist his Maker any longer, but give all up to God, make no conditions, and trust it wholly to God's benevolence and wisdom to decide what shall be done, and to appoint his future condition. Until you do this, sinner, you have done nothing to the purpose.

3. Another proper direction to be given to sinners, is to *confess and forsake your sins.* This means that they should both confess and forsake them. They must confess to God their sins against God, and confess to men their sins against men, and forsake them all. A man does not forsake his sins till he has made all the reparation in his power. If he has stolen money, or defrauded his neighbor out of property, he does not forsake his sins by merely resolving not to steal any more, or not to cheat again; he must make reparation to the extent of his power. So, if he has slandered any one, he does not forsake his sin by merely saying he will not do so again. He must make reparation. So, in like manner, if he has robbed God, as all sinners have, he must make reparation, as far as he has the power. Suppose a man has made money in rebellion against God, and has withheld from him his time, talents and service, has lived and rioted upon the bounties of his providence, and refused to lay himself out for the salvation of the world; he has robbed God. Now, if he should die feeling that this money was *his own,* and should he leave it to his heirs without consulting the will of God—why, he is just as certain to go to hell as the highway robber. He has never made any satisfaction to God. With all his whining and pious talk, he has never confessed his sin to God, nor forsaken his sin, for he has never felt nor acknowledged himself to be the steward of God. If he refuses to hold the property in his possession, as the steward of God; if he accounts it his own, and as such gives it to his children, he says, in effect, to God, "That property is not yours, it is mine, and I will give it to my children." He has continued to persevere in

his sin, for he does not relinquish the ownership of that of which he has robbed God.

What would a merchant think, if his hired clerk should take all the capital and set up a store of his own, and die with it in his hands? Will such a man go to heaven? "No," you say, every one of you, "If such a man does not go to hell, there might just as well be no hell." God would prove himself infinitely unjust, to let such a character go unpunished. What, then, shall we say of the man who has robbed God all his life? Here God set him to be his clerk, to manage some of his affairs, and he has gone and stolen all the money, and says it is his, and he keeps it, and dies, and gives it to his children, as if it were all his own lawful property. Is that man going to heaven? Has that man forsaken sin? I tell you, no. If he has not surrendered himself and all to God, he has not taken the first step in the way to heaven.

6. Another proper direction to be given to sinners is, *"Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve."* Under the Old Testament dispensation, this or something equivalent to it, was the most common direction given. It was not common to call on men to *believe in Christ* until the days of John the Baptist. He baptized those who came to him, with the baptism of repentance, and directed them to believe on him who should come after him. Under Joshua, the text was something which the people all understood more easily than they would a call to believe on the distant Messiah; it was "Choose ye, this day, whom ye will serve." On another occasion, Moses said to them, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." The direction was accommodated to the people's knowledge. And it is good now, as it was then. Sinners are called upon to choose—what? Whether they will serve God or the world—whether they will follow holiness or sin. Let them be made to understand what is meant by choosing, and what it is to be chosen, and then if the thing is done from the heart, they will be saved.

Any of these directions, if complied with, will constitute true conversion. The particular exercises may vary in different cases. Sometimes the first exercise in conversion, is submission to God, sometimes repentance, sometimes faith, sometimes the choice of God and his service, in short, whatever their thoughts are taken up with at the time. If their thoughts are directed to Christ at the moment, the first exercise will be faith. If to sin, the first exercise will be repentance. If to their future course of life, it is choosing the service of God. If to the divine government, it is submission. It is important to find out just where the Holy Spirit is pressing the sinner at the time, and then take care to push that point. If it is in regard to Christ, press that; if it is in regard to his future course of life, push him right up to an immediate choice of obedience to God.

It is a great error to suppose that any one particular exercise is always foremost in conversion, or, that every sinner must have faith first, or submission first. It is not true, either in philosophy or in fact. There is a great variety in people's exercises. Whatever point is taken hold of, between God and the sinner, when the sinner yields that, he is converted. Whatever the particular exercise may be, if it includes *obedience of heart to God on any point,* it is true conversion. When he yields one point *to God's authority,* he is ready to yield all. When he changes his mind, and obeys in one thing, *because it is God's will,* he will obey in other things, so far as he sees it to be God's will. Where there is this right choice, then, whenever the mind is directed to any one point of duty, he is ready to follow. It matters very little which of these directions is given, if it is only made plain, and if it is to the point, so as to serve as a test of *obedience to God.* If it is to the point that the Spirit of God is debating with the sinner's mind, so as to fall in with the Spirit's work, and not to

divert the sinner's attention from the very point in controversy, let it be made perfectly clear, and then pressed till the sinner yields, and he will be saved.

III. I am to mention several errors which anxious sinners are apt to fall into, respecting this great inquiry.

1. The first error is, in supposing that they must make themselves better, or prepare themselves, so as in some way to recommend themselves to the mercy of God. It is marvelous, that sinners will not understand, that all they have to do is to *accept* salvation from God, all prepared to their hands. But they all, learned or unlearned, at first, betake themselves to a legal course to get relief. This is one principal reason why they will not become Christians at once, just as soon as they begin to attend to the subject. They imagine that they must be, in some way or other, *prepared* to come. They must change their dress, and make themselves look a little better; they are not willing to come just as they are, in their rags and poverty. They must have something more on, before they can approach to God. They should be shown, at once, that it is impossible they should be any better, until they do what God requires. Every pulse that beats, every breath they draw, they are growing worse, because they are standing out in rebellion against God, so long as they *do not do the very thing* which God requires of them as the first thing to be done.

2. Another error is, in supposing that they must *suffer a considerable time under conviction,* as a kind of punishment, before they are ready properly to come to Christ. And so they will pray for conviction. And they think, that if they are ground down to the earth, with distress, for a sufficient time, then God will pity them, and be more ready to help them, when he sees them so very miserable. They should be made to understand clearly, that they are thus unhappy and miserable, *merely because* they refuse to accept the relief which God offers. Take the case of the stubborn child, when his parent stands over him with the rod, and the child shudders and screams. Should that child imagine he is gaining anything by his agony? His distress arises from his conviction, and shall he pray for more conviction? Does that make him any better? Does his father pity him any more, because he stands out? Who does not see that he is all the while growing worse?

3. Sometimes sinners *imagine that they must wait for different feelings,* before they submit to God. They say, "I do not think I feel right yet, to accept of Christ; I do not think I am prepared to be converted yet." They ought to be made to see that what God requires of them is to *will* right. If they obey and submit with the *will,* the *feelings* will adjust themselves in due time. It is not a question of *feeling,* but of *willing* and *acting.*

The *feelings* are involuntary, and have no moral character except what they derive from their action of the will, with which action they sympathize. Before the will is right, the feelings will not be, of course. The sinner should come to Christ by accepting him at once; and this he must do, not in obedience to his *feelings,* but in obedience to his *conscience.* Obey, submit, trust. Give up all instantly, and your feelings will come right. Do not wait for better feelings, but commit your whole being to God at once, and this will soon result in the feelings for which you are waiting. What God requires of you, is the present act of your own mind, in turning from sin to holiness, and from the service of Satan to the service of the living God.

4. Another error of sinners, is to suppose they *must wait* till their *hearts are changed.* "What?" say they, "am I to believe in Christ before my heart is changed? Do you mean that I am to repent before my heart is changed? Now, the simple answer to all this is, that the change of heart is the very thing in question. God requires sinners to love him. *That is* to change their hearts. God requires the sinner to believe the Gospel. *That is* to change his heart. God requires him to repent. *That is* to change his heart. God does not tell him to wait till his heart is

changed, and then repent and believe, and love God. The very word itself, *repent* signifies a change of mind or heart. To do either of these things, is to change your heart, and to make you a new heart, just as God requires.

5. Sinners often get the idea that they are perfectly willing to do what God requires. Tell them to do this thing, or that, to repent, or believe, or give God their hearts, and they say, "Oh, yes, I am perfectly willing to do that, I wish I could do it, I would give anything if I could do it." They ought to understand, that, being truly *willing* is doing it, but there is a difference between willing and desiring. People often *desire* to be Christians, when they are wholly *unwilling* to be so. When we see anything which appears to us to be a good, we are so constituted that we desire it. We necessarily desire it when it is before our minds. We cannot help desiring it in proportion as its goodness is presented to our minds. But yet we may not be *willing* to have it, under all the circumstances. It may be that we prefer, upon the whole, that the present possessor should continue to possess it still. Or that *we* choose to have our friend or child possess it, instead of ourselves. A man may desire to go to Philadelphia on many accounts, while, for still more weighty reasons, he *chooses* not to go there. So the sinner may desire to be a Christian. He may see many good things in being a Christian. He may see that if he were a Christian he would be a great deal more happy, and that he should go to heaven when he dies, but yet he is not willing to be a Christian. Willing to obey Christ is to be a Christian. When an individual actually *chooses* to obey God, he is a Christian. But all such desires, as do not imply actual choice, are nothing.

6. The sinner will sometimes say, that he *offers* to give God his heart, but he intimates that God is unwilling. But this is absurd. What does God ask? Why, that you should love him. Now, for you to say you are willing to give God your heart, but God is unwilling, is the same as saying that you are willing to love God, but God is not willing to be loved by you, and will not suffer you to love him. It is important to clear up all these points in the sinner's mind, that he may have no dark and mysterious corner to rest in, where the truth will not reach him.

7. Sinners sometimes get the idea that they repent, when they are only convicted. Whenever the sinner is found resting in any lie, let the truth sweep it away, however much it may pain and distress him. If he has any error of this kind, you must tear it away from him, if you do not mean that he shall stumble into the depths of hell.

8. Sinners are often wholly taken up with *looking at themselves,* to see if they cannot find something there, some kind of feeling or other, that will recommend them to God. Evidently, for want of proper instruction, David Brainard was a long time taken up with his *state of mind,* looking for some *feelings* that would recommend him to God. Sometimes he imagined that he had such feelings, and would tell God in prayer, that now he felt as he ought, to receive his mercy; and then he would see that he had been all wrong, and be ashamed that he had told God that he felt right. Thus, the poor man, for want of correct instruction, was driven almost to despair, and it is easy to see that his Christian exercises through life were greatly modified, and his comfort and usefulness much impaired by the false philosophy he had adopted on this point. You must turn the sinner away from himself to something else. Suppose he keeps poring over himself, until he is going into a state of despair. The proper course then is, to turn off his attention from looking at himself, and make him look at some duty to be performed, or make him look at Christ, and, perhaps, before he is aware, he will find that he has submitted to God. His attention was diverted away from himself, to contemplate the reasonableness of God's requirements, or the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, or something of this kind, and as he dwelt upon it, he just gave up his heart, and the agony was over.—From Finney's Lectures on Revivals.

TO THE UTTERMOST.

W. J. DAWSON.

But we see Jesus.—Hebrews ii: 8. *Wherefore, he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.*—Hebrews vii: 24.

The great conception of the writer of this epistle, whom we may suspect to have been St. Paul, is Jesus Christ as the center of humanity; the center of the universe; the center of authority, love, worship and service. All things converging on Christ; all things radiating from Christ. He says he is the holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, crowned with many crowns; the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He is the Lord of two worlds—one that is in accord, the other that is in revolt—and as the angels worship him he was made a little lower than the angels, so men shall worship him who has been triumphant by sacrifice. Jesus must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. All the worlds are hastening to the coronation of Jesus, and last of all, the world which he purchased with his own blood shall own his sway and so Christ shall be all and in all. Now that is a magnificent conception, beyond doubt. But the ordinary man will possibly say, "What has it to do with me? It may interest the dreamer of dreams and the writer of ethics and the master of intricate and sublime theology, but what relation has it in common with men and women toiling in a difficult and harsh world?" The answer is that Paul also toiled in a difficult and harsh world and he found that world intolerable except for the face of Jesus. Every plainest, humblest man needs and seeks some explanation of the world in which he lives. There is nothing more pathetic in recent literature than the closing sentence of Herbert Spencer's autobiography, in which he says that he has come to regard religion as a sympathetic base upon community of need. Spencer felt that he needed something he had not found. Paul felt that he could not live without an explanation of the world, and the explanation of the world for Paul, as it has been for multitudes through the ages, is Jesus Christ. "We see Jesus." What is it that he sees? He sees the lost sovereignty of man. He sees somthing wrong with man. There is something that retards him from greatness—all things are not put under him. He sees, in the second place, the sovereignty regained in Jesus, because he has put under himself all things that hinder man from greatness. And so he sees Christ as the last hope of humanity. Christ interprets man, Christ vindicates man, Christ raises man up to his own level and wins back for him his lost sovereignty. "He is able to save to the uttermost." That is the great threefold conception of Christianity, and it is, then, from some shining coigne of vantage, above the confused strife of this unintelligible world, that the apostle looks far into the future and he says, "I see man, man with all his brutality and folly and with all his crime, but I also see Jesus. I see Jesus, who, being man, carried the manhood into godhead. He is the promise of man's universal redemption."

THE LOST SOVEREIGNTY OF MAN.

Think for a moment, first, of what is meant by the lost sovereignty of man, for that is the first part of this vision. All things are not put under him. When we

think of man in relation to the universe there are two moods that have power over us. The first is the mood of unbounded admiration for man and for his doings. It is Shakespeare's mood expressed in the immortal soliloquy of Hamlet.

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! in form and moving how expressive and admirable; in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!" Dr. Hillis the other day, when we walked over Brooklyn Bridge, pointed to the huge structure and said: "We see man perpetually doing things which no other creature upon the earth gives a sign of possessing the faculty to do." Throwing a film of wire like a gossamer around the earth on which he whispers his thoughts, leveling his tiny lenses against the midnight sky and compelling the firmament to give up the secrets of its stars and constellations. Framing, from rude hieroglyphics, music and literature, taking hold of matter and controlling it with so marvelous a skill and mastery, that looking upon man, we are amazed; we are lost in admiration; we are astonished at the brilliance of his invention, the restlessness of his mind and the resources of his will until we begin to understand how the primal temptation of man was to take himself for a god. For there is something of the lost sovereignty still left upon him and all the original glory has not yet faded from his brow. Ah, but there is another mood, a mood that comes to us when we are conscious, not of the greatness of man but of the futility and the impotence of man. All things put under him, masses of matter; able to erect a Brooklyn Bridge. Aye, but the fool of destiny and the sport of time! He sews and he knows not who shall reap; he heaps up, and he knows not who shall gather; he builds his palaces and cities but the lightning destroys his work and the fire destroys his city; his life is not worth a moment's purchase; he is in jeopardy every hour. Just on the height of thought his brain snaps. He is an imbecile; just on the brink of triumph, the air vibrates, he is a gibbering paralytic; his plans are broken off and ruined; the tide runs over him; men fail him, till, at last, in his bitterness, he cries that even the stars fight against him. All things under his feet? No, indeed, neither circumstances, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor death; and he can sink so low, he can become so bestial in his lusts, he can become so mean and malevolent in his acts that a dog might scorn him, a horse might refuse companionship with him. All things are not put under man and he is the paradox of human nature, greatness and meanness, wisdom and folly interwoven; and all this is explained by the phrase of the writer in this chapter when he speaks of the lost sovereignty of man.

CAN MAN RISE AGAIN?

The question, then, which at once comes to the thoughtful man is, Can man rise again? Can he regain this lost sovereignty? Here is man in the thraldom of a threefold thraldom: to sin, to self, to death. He fails of moral height and grandeur through sin, he fails of nobility through selfishness, he fails of permanence and work through death. To be truly great, man should be sinless, unselfish and immortal. Can a man become that? The answer is "We see Jesus." We see in him complete manhood. We see in Christ man as God meant man to be and the great word comes echoing down to us in its infinity and almost incredible terms: "Till we all come to the stature of a man in Christ." "We see Jesus" regaining the lost sovereignty, but how? First of all Jesus put sin under him and teaches us there lies the way of our deliverance. The conception of the sinless man exists only in theology. A prophet, an elder, an inspired man, one who holds converse with the heavens, that conception exists in other religions, but the idea of one who is sinless, who never wronged another, who never thought wrong, on whose clean soul no shadow of evil fell, though a man

pressed close upon him, this is the absolute unique conception of Christianity, and it is something beyond the invention of man. The blind imagination of man could never have created that figure of the Christ, tempted in all points like as we are, only without sin, but it was the conception of God and it was perfected in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus challenged his worst foes, who watched him with the sleepless energy of malice, to convict him of sin, and they were silenced. He passed his life, not in the sweet solitude of the mountains, but in the heat of cities; not in holy seclusion, but in the eye of all men. He was never unattended; he ate with publicans while Pharisees watched; he talked with sinners while Sadducees listened to him, the taint of whose moral leprosy never touched or soiled him. Upon the brink of death he declares, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." His judge declared, as he sentenced him, that he had done no wrong at all. His herald proclaimed him the Lamb of God; and it is as a lamb, sinned against but not sinning, that he goes to the slaughter. He put sin under him; trod it down as a venomous snake; died with the whole voice of heaven and earth witnessing around and above his cross, in awful unanimity, that he died for sins not his own. "We see Jesus."

We turn from the spectacle of man in his abasement, as one in a lazar house might lift his head and see entering the abode of shame the white-robed minister of mercy, and "We see Jesus." We see that sinlessness is possible. We see that though the serpent is strong, so there is one who can stay the serpent. And Jesus reveals to us our own future. Jesus shows us what we yet may become. His dying lips blow the trumpet of hope. His voice runs round the world; hear it and rejoice! It is the announcement of your own sovereignty restored and your own kingship come back to you. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." "The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin."

THE SLAVES OF SELFISHNESS.

Man has failed of nobility through selfishness, and, again, "We see Jesus." What is the source of all human sin but selfishness? What is the source of that act which takes the wealth of life for yourself? What is the root of that pleasure of passion which for a moment of intoxicating delight will fling a wronged and blighted woman on the world's highway; that fills city streets with vice and graves with broken hearts? Selfishness. Men live for themselves; love themselves; think only of themselves and then self masters them. They become its slaves; they cease to have dominion over their baser lusts; they become under those powers which God meant to be ordered in just and righteous mastery. Oh, do you despair when you think of it? Do you say: "I was born a slave, a slave I must die, I cannot break the chain. I know I am selfish." Oh, coward, hearken! "We see Jesus," born as we were born; dying as we must die. Jesus, who never did a selfish thing Jesus, whose life was one long and brilliant sacrifice and who stands beside the cross of Calvary, radiant with his blood and lifts his wounded hand to proclaim liberty to the captive, the opening of prison doors to them that are bound. Christ puts himself under and points you the way back to your lost kingship. Have you ever thought of death as the last revenge of sin? It turns the fair body into corruption, for it is by and through corruption that it receives its power and mandate. It treads the body, the work of God, down beneath its iron feet and the "sting of death is sin," for it is by sin that death has gained power to smite us and affect us and drag us down into foul chambers of decay. Do you dread death? Who does not? Do you tremble as its cold breath passes over you? Have you implored it to spare you? Have you striven to pluck your sweet boy from its grasp? One went out of the house and took the light of the house with him. Weeping Mary, let thy tears be wiped away. Look! We see Jesus.

He stands, bright and fair, in the doorway of the tomb; no blood stain on his raiment, and two young men, from that city where men are never old, sit in the empty tomb and smile, and he says: "I am the resurrection and the life, whoso believeth in me shall never die." There is your lost sovereignty come back in Christ. Having thus overcome sin, conquered self and subjugated death, Christ ascended into heaven, leading captivity captive. And Paul looks and cries: "All things are yours." (He is speaking of salvation.) "All things are yours, whether Paul or Cephas or Apollos, or life or death." Death is yours. You are no longer his; for when you come to Christ and share his love you have got the power to trample sin down; you have got the power to purge yourself of self, and you will have the power to rise victor over death. The three-fold vision of Christ. "We see Jesus."

A CHRIST IN EVERY MAN.

Now this is what Christ has done. He has carried manhood up to Godhead. And now, oh, my brothers, will you try to receive into your minds the most tremendous thought that can enter any human mind? As Christ was man, so men may be as Christ. There is a Christ in every man, a suggested Christ, a concealed Christ, an embryo Christ, and you also may stand victor over the foes that spoiled your manhood for "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Amazing thought! A sublime impertinence it seems for us even to use the words. Yet the words of Jesus are clear, are they not? "I go to prepare a place for you. Where I am ye may be also." And the word of St. Paul is clear, is it not? "Let the mind that was in Christ be the mind that is in you." I see you frail, weak, simple, weary; a poor creature enough, it may be. Ah, but I see Jesus in you, for even your poor heart may become the Bethlehem of the new incarnation of the Son of God. "What?" you say, "Do you really believe that? Do you mean to tell me that there is a Christ in that poor drunkard lying in the gutter to his shame and defilement?" Yes, I do. His name is John Gough. "What?" you say, "do you mean to tell me that there is a Christ concealed in that woman laden with iniquity, whose life is an infection to a pure imagination?" Yes, I do, for her name is Mary Magdalene. "What," you say, "do you mean to tell me that there is a Christ concealed in the criminal fresh out of jail?" Yes, I do, for it was to a man like that Jesus said: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." I may see all that is distasteful, all that is hateful, and all that is contemptible in you, but I also see Jesus in you. I see the Christ that is to be. Aye, and Christ sees himself in you. He saw the apostle of love in John, the son of thunder, and he saw the apostle of grace in Saul the persecutor. He sees himself in you. When Sister Dora lay dying and wrote her last letter (her life, you remember, was spent among smallpox patients; she literally gave her life for others) to a woman, who was going to take up nursing as a profession, she said: "Don't think of it as a profession; but as you touch each patient think it is Christ whom you are touching and then virtue will come out of the touch to yourself." She had learned to see a Christ in her patients. Christ sees himself in you. And if you say: "This sounds like a dream." If you listen incredulously—if, knowing far more about your sin than any one else does, you say: "I will remove all infinities from the thought of Christ, yet how can I live like that?" Jesus speaks to you: "He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him.' Do you believe it?

CONVERSION OF THE WICKED.

Come with me to medieval times for a moment, and see this picture from life of Catherine of Sienna. There was a certain criminal, Nicolo Taldo, who was con-

demned to die, and he did nothing but curse God, so that no priest would go near him. Then Catherine went, and he became quiet as a child and he made her promise to stand beside him on the day of his execution, and, says Catherine, speaking of the scene: "He laid his head upon my bosom, and I said, 'Comfort thee, my brother, the block shall soon become thy marriage altar; the blood of Christ shall bathe thy sins away.' And when the time came for him to die he died as a gentle lamb, and his last words were: 'Jesus, Catherine, Jesus.'" That belongs to the age of faith, that was in medieval days, and that was Catherine of Sienna, but here is something that happened about a year ago in my own country. I read in a paper one morning of a dreadful murder. The murderer was condemned and justly condemned and, as I said in my heart, if ever a man deserved to be hanged it was that villain. I felt as though I would like to see him hanged, so atrocious was the crime. I thought no more of it, but a few months later I met a friend of mine, a minister, who among other duties had become a visiting chaplain at Wandsworth jail and he told me about this man, this execrable villain, this human viper, whose crime was so atrocious that men thought it was good for him to be gone out of a decent world. My friend told me how he went to see that man in his cell, how he was as hard as iron, how at last he melted a little, how presently, with a burst of tears he acknowledged that he once had been in a Methodist Sunday School. Then the man's heart slowly, very slowly opened. One night when my friend was asleep, after midnight, there was a knock at his door and a warder stood there with a message from the doctor of the jail. The governor of the jail was not a man likely to be deceived by mock religion, and he had sent the warder to say, "Edwards is converted." Out of his bed my friend leaped and through the dark night he went to Wandsworth jail and found the poor fellow on his knees reading a hymn which he had learned as a boy in the Sunday School:

Although my sins as mountains rise
And soar and reach to heaven,
Forgiveness is above the skies
And I may be forgiven.

When the time came for that poor fellow to die he went down the dismal path to the scaffold softly whispering:

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly.

That is not a medieval story, it is a story of yesterday.

THE BOUNDLESS GRACE OF GOD.

I know not how to close. I feel as though I could talk all night about the boundless grace of God; the lifting up of poor sinners into Christhood, the Christ life, by infinite grace, for it is this fact of the grace of God in the world which alone makes me able to face the world. Oh, there are times when we are blinded with tears almost. You look out upon the world and it is so crammed and packed with tragedy, and the old tyranny seems to have given place to new ones, and when that dark mood sweeps over me I try to see Jesus; and I think of the great vision the poet, Heine, had. He pictured all the gods of wrong and lust seated at their banquet table. Suddenly there enters a poor, pale Jew with a heavy cross upon his shoulder. He flings down the cross upon the table before all the gods and they disappear and that one man stands there alone and supreme. Ah, that is what has happened in history

and it is what is going to happen through the history of the future. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

Let me plead with you to-night, my brother, once more. It is possible that some of you may be led to say: "Surely you have made a mistaken appeal to-night. You have told us stories of drunkards and criminals. You scarcely suppose we need that appeal. We are different." Different in what? Do clothes and education make a difference? Remember that clothes and manners are only the clothes of your social position. Dare you say you are not a sinner? Dare you say you do not need a Savior. Dare you say that Jesus is nothing to you because he has nothing to give you that you have not got? We know better. We know that we have needs. That, although we may not sink in vice, yet our hearts may be corrupt with selfishness. Tell me one thing: Are you the man you want to be? Are you the woman you once dreamed you would be? Have you touched the best that you yourself have conceived and desired in the best moments of your life? If you have not, you need Jesus. A man of education, a man of culture, a man of wealth, you need Jesus quite as much as the poor sinner in the outer darkness there. Jesus is able to save the selfish people and to save us each and all to the uttermost when we come to God through him. Shall we not to-night, with the vision of the triumphant Jesus before us, seek with him to triumph over sin, self and death? You have had your visions of Jesus many times. You have had them here, this week, it may be. Now, maybe the vision became so clear that you can resist it no longer. The vision of Jesus comes to you, calling you, saying: "Follow me."—Copyrighted 1904 by the Brooklyn Eagle, and reproduced herewith by permission.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D.

For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.—I. Peter ii: 21.

Nothing is harder than suffering, and nothing higher than imitation of Christ. Yet the two things are here bound together. If we would follow him, we must suffer as he did—suffering is part of the likeness and grows out of it. Jesus lived to be imitated; we live to imitate. He left to us an example of moral loveliness and simplicity, of spiritual perfection and excellence, and we have to follow his footsteps. Often it may be afar, or even an immeasurable distance behind, yet it is always certain that the end can be reached. There is a massive gentleness—an excellent and infinite grace and glory in him and in his character. Time was needed to make manifest what it contained. The men and the ages that stood nearest to him did not see all we can now see in him and in his actions. He had, indeed, marvelous strength; it seemed as if he were a "bruised reed," yet he was a reed that the evil in all its forms could neither bend nor break. He appeared only as "smoking flax," yet the flax that smoked was a light which the darkness of the world could not quench, which, indeed, quenched that darkness. Yet the strength that was in him was not simply

sufficient for himself; it became transparent, transformed into us, forming within us great virtues akin to his own. His has, indeed, been a fruitful character, a parent of multitudinous characters akin to his own, a creator of higher and nobler virtues than have come to man through any other source.

We were to follow his footsteps, and though it be faultily, distantly, rudely, we have still tried to follow. Beside him we may be like children trying to copy the color, the marvelous form and expression, Raphael has given to his women. But still, in the very trial and its failures lies the path to success. He has left us an example—ours is to follow in his steps.

There is nothing more sure or certain than that man can best be cultivated by imitation; that it is copying the great and beautiful type of example that educates man. It is only the few and the elect and the rare that can be original—the mass must be imitators; and even as regards the originals they become models by working after a model or an idea. Men have defined art as the imitation of nature, but the nature it imitates is not, of course, nature devoid of life that lies behind man, but the beautiful nature transfigured by mind that lives within him. The supreme genius in art is the man that sees furthest into nature, and gives most of himself to the nature that he sees. He can make us feel that in a scene that is just prosaic to us lies a light that was never on sea or shore, and he can make us feel the inspiration and the poet's dream. To a man trained after a great master, the nature that is to be imitated is a nature transfigured and made, as it were, divine. To one race, God gave the sense of beauty. The Greek read the meaning of the "human form divine," expressed it in his art, and bequeathed his gift to all posterity. When the rude barbarian made an end of Greek beauty, and buried it under its own ruins, the very sense of grace and shapeliness and seemliness seemed to die out of the mind of men. When, in later days, under the ruins, the shapely bust, the beautiful head, the rare and exquisite form of the hero and of the god were discovered, there came back to man a new feeling for art, and by copying the antique, by imitating the Greek, he regained his lost sense of beauty.

MAN'S PROGRESS TOWARDS GOD.

So in an order by himself, infinitely higher than the order of ourselves, stands the man Jesus Christ. Man's lost sense of God, man's lost sense of spiritual loveliness, come back to him in the presence of Christ; and as he copies he is cultivated, as he imitates he grows like the divine, for the highest region in which cultivation by imitation can be seen is religious. Yet there, too, it is a thing of nature, though nature at her highest and purest. Man is to be an imitator of God, for he is, as it were, of the stock of God; he bore the divine image and had the divine superscription before the image was defaced and the superscription effaced, but the ruined image and superscription are both restored. Man in order to be godly must be God-like, and his God-likeness is a matter of nature; because we are of God's kin, we are of God's kind. Mind from highest to lowest is still mind; the divine and the human may be infinitely distant, yet the distance is of degree, not of nature. Within the kingdom of nature there are divisions where things approach and even touch, and yet are never inter-confused. The mineral does not change into the vegetable; the vegetable is not transformed into the animal; the animal does not grow into the man. But in the kingdom of mind, between the highest, the Maker of the universe, and the lowest, looking through the hardly human eye of the savage, there is an infinite distance in degree, yet there is no absolute difference of kind between Shakespeare's fancy's sweetest child and the almost brutal Kaffir. Between Newton reading with piercing eye into the mechanism of heaven and the hardly articulate Australian

there may intervene what seems an impassable gulf, but it is a gulf that time and opportunity and culture can bridge.

Give the thousands of years of training to the savage that the civilized man has had, and he is savage no more—he, too, stands up, civilized man. So between God and man there is and ever must be an infinite distance. Yet the progressive nature of created mind makes it an infinite impossibility that mind shall ever approach towards a divine that cannot be reached, yet which it ever has in view. He who comes as man into the world is just a little lower than the angels; give him the angel's opportunity and time, and there is no angelic space he will not cover, no path he will not tread, no end he will not gain. Man thus capable of infinite progress, progression indefinite, is man by imitation, can be cultivated, made the image of the divine.

Since, then, man's kinship to God involves the capability of likeness to God, the main point needed is the image of the Divine, the apparent manifest copy of the eternal. In the old law it was said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Yet that God was just, as it were man's own notion of the divine. It did not stand manifest, incorporate, incarnate, before heaven, but the very image of God had this strength and distinctive quality. He also was the Son of Man, the true and perfect image of the eternal, and at the same time the true and perfect image of the temple. Here you will observe that, just because of this, Christ is the most imitable of all characters. He is the one being in history that all historical men can copy, and, as it were, reproduce. Do not think that that is a mere pulpit paradox. He is indeed pre-eminent, one with whom man may be contrasted rather than compared. He stands in a supreme order, or, as it were, by himself. So much is this the case that to love him is to love all mankind, to serve him is to serve man and God and eternity. In obedience to him and in honor of his name, men have built great churches, reared immense cathedrals, that look down upon their commerce and preside over their daily life; in honor of his name they have chosen reproach, surrender of pleasures of sin, and lived the highest and noblest life, and for love of him they have courted shame. Love of him has quieted their heart, angry at its own suffering, and given richer and newer meaning to all the passions and all the pages of time. When you look at him in his relation to man, he is alone the one being who has no fellow, the one power that is the power in life, in thought, in character.

SAINTS IN COMMON LIFE.

Yet this very supremacy makes him universal. He who is unlike all men is imitable by every man; the character he is all men may be, and his great passion is to make them become so. Herein lies one of the strange and distinctive evidences, as it were, of his mission and his work. Great men are never imitable in the elements of their most distinctive greatness. In the middle of this century we had a great and potent teacher, who never tired in preaching his gospel, which consisted of two great elements—let work be prayer and find the hero, the great man worshiping, for that is the only religion now possible. Obey him, for he is the only king that can now reign; and he used to tell in ever varying phrase that if we did not submit to the hero, but insisted in regulating our own lives, making our own laws, directing our own ends, then we should shoot Niagara, and be drawn into the awful sweep of those waters, rush on to a destruction that destroys all things but itself. Yet he forgot that human genius is but a passing thing, the hero of man makes miry clay. His gospel any man might preach. He found the highest God for man to be in humanity; his gospel we may not preach who know a higher God than man. Genius as genius is never imitable. It leaves its creations; it does not leave itself for posses-

sion; for he can make his epic or his drama, but it is his creation that he leaves us to admire, not his genius that he leaves to imitate. So, too, the great thinker may coin the thought that is within him into gold that circulates in the mart of the mind, and is there minted into thin, light coin that does for the daily counters of life, but still it is only the creation that we have; it is not the mind created that we can imitate. So, too, churches have their saints. Catholicism creates the being that lives in ecstasy, the vision that sees strange things—a great martyr or a father or statesman that does a great service, gives him canonical dignity, beatifies him indeed as though he were divine. What we need is to canonize the mother, whose soft hand shapes all manhood and womanhood of the future; what we need is to canonize the workman who in the workshop and midst living profanity bears a character that is without reproach, and a name that compels us to honor him; what we need is to create out of those who keep living, in the exchange, in the warehouse, in the Senate, the virtues that we deem humanity, and make this life of ours nearer to the life of God.

Here you see the marvelous thing that makes Christ. It is not in what is extraordinary, but in what is ordinary; it is not what flares up on the forefront of the morning sky, but what is humble, domestic, civic, religious after a fashion possible to common men and women. It is this marvelous ordinariness, if I may so call it, this universality, fit for all men in all places, that makes Christ a pre-eminently imitable character. Not in what is exceptional, but in what is law; not in what is unusual, but in what is common; not in what is a thing of genius, but in what is a gift of God, lies the great and beautiful power of Christ, the character we can imitate. Let me express and represent how very varied the phases and aspects in which he appears to men may be seen. It is strange, but true, that the religiousness or piety of an age can best be seen in its sensitiveness to the personal influence of Christ. Dogma, creed, system—these are things easily served; but you keep man nearer to God through a direct, personal study of Jesus than through all the teaching and all the creeds ever formulated by all the churches in Christendom. Yet see how often these creeds turn back upon him and give him another and less noble complexion than he has in his own gospels.

CHRIST IN ART AND LITERATURE.

Turn to the history of Christian art and literature as expressed in the conception of Jesus and see what it says. In earliest Christian art Jesus appears as a radiant youth; a kind of eternal youthfulness looks out from his placid and radiant brow. Something of the old Greek love of beauty still lived, and they made Jesus beautiful—beautiful as the dream of man could make him. They represented him in two forms: first as a teacher sitting in the midst of his disciples, creating life and making radiant, whose very person is a lesson in moral and physical beauty. The other form is the form of a shepherd, coming home with lamb or the lost sheep, bearing the one in his arms and the other on his shoulder, bearing it, by strength which yet was love, home to safety and to God. When the world which was the church grew further and further from his spirit and became possessed by the sadness of a disordered mind and threw back upon him a misery and a pain unknown to the older Christ, then you see the mediæval master rise, the man who suffered pain; and they began to represent him with a crown of thorns, to represent him with the wounded hands and the wounded side. And you have it in his modern reproduction—the weariness of the carpenter in his workshop, tired with anguish, raising himself in his weariness and shaping himself like a cross and casting its shadow upon his simple-minded mother The art that sees in Christ only the man of sorrow, only the one who never had, as

it were, the ever-radiant beauty save as a child in his mother's arms, is surely false to life. I would not speak one ungenerous word of that great devotional mood; its spirit of devotion is beautiful, needful, never more needful than now; it is the quality of its devotion that needs to be entirely and radically changed. It turns an ascetic face to him. What underlies it, is the complaint of the preacher, of the old skeptic that survives in Ecclesiastes who preaches "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" and he turns from the world with that feeling, renouncing all and giving himself up to monastic seclusion and the misery that it brings. Never was this monastic self-torture in life native to Christ. He never said, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." A devotion based on the spirit of vanity as expressed here is not a devotion that expresses the soul and the inspiration of Christ. He loved man; he was an enemy of disease as well as of sin; he was physician of the soul, but also of the body. He did not love to see the blind man sitting by the wayside begging; blindness he labored to remove, and begging he labored to end. As he loved life he loved joy. His first gracious appearance was at a wedding feast, making the joy of the wedding more abundant with his presence. He loved nature with a rich, great affection. Take the sermon on the lily, and see how he appreciated its pure and tender beauty! Look at the parables, and hear how he expresses his feeling with regard to the cultivation of the mustard seed, the sower going out to sow, the growth of the vine and the fig tree. Many a day he must have spent on the hills that clustered around Nazareth, many a time he must have walked out into the valleys with tender imagination and fancy free, dwelling on the things they symbolized—the great heaven above, and the silent yet everywhere present God.

So Jesus drawing in upon him all that was beautiful in nature, placing himself against all that was evil in man, gave us his great example, an example that carried with it suffering. He who would cure ill must suffer from the ill he cures in doing it. He took upon him our sin, for the man who never stooped to sin, to ignorance, never helped to do away with it, the man who never saw crime, never ended it. The passion of Christ was a passion to save, that involved hatred of ill and sin, but love of life.

So I ask you to consider the character you have to imitate, the example you have to follow, and—mark it well—there does not go before it a cross, and the singing of hymns after it; he is not clothed in stole and mitre; he is not clad in hood and gown; his part of the procession is in amongst the ranks of pain and of suffering men. The cross lies on him daily, and he bears it; he does it that he may redeem men from sin, that he may end its reign and bring peace. He does not come without a framework of law and order; but never did you find in the whole history of man any one who said so little about machinery; he had so little machinery about him. All he did was impersonated in himself, and through himself passed out to affect, to influence, to lead, to inspire men. Man he was that man he might make; suffer he did, that suffering he might end. So stand before him! Let no modern man, no modern system, no office and no function, come between you and him! Work after the manner and according to the model of the great original; be ye Christians by being Christ-like, then shall ye continue his work among men. Make men still feel that Christ he lives, and that Christ he saves, Son of God by being Son of Man, for evermore.

OUR STRENGTH COMMANDED.

F. W. GUNSAULUS, D.D.

Thy God hath commanded thy strength.—Psalm lxviii:28.

This is one of the grand old songs of the song-producing past, which always suggests itself to martial minds under critical circumstances, and comes with its old melody at those moments in human experience when some great contest of emotions rages in human bosoms and when a valuable victory may be won.

It was a mighty distance which lay between David, the singer of this song, and Oliver Cromwell as he marched with his Ironsides up the heights of Dunbar; but so strong was the melody, so mighty and rich the harmony, that it swept over those centuries with ease. When the indomitable Puritan looked up toward those heights and began to see the danger around and the possibilities of defeat, he roused every energy within his soldiers and inspired every force anew in his own breast, by crying out, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered." "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." It is one of those songs which come to us who have no battles of Dunbar to fight upon fields of Scotland, who have no such problems as those which confronted David in those moments of most critical importance; but it comes to us who have wearying problems that are all the more difficult because sometimes they are seemingly so small, all the more likely to be unsolved because they do not seem to be so picturesque and noble as were his; problems that are as vital to the world's history and to our salvation as was the problem which hung in the air above Dunbar, or as that which lingered beneath the stars above the head of David when he began to sing. They are questions that mean life to you and me, so profoundly related are they to everything that is true to us here and to everything that is noble and true and inspiring in the life that is to come.

This great song begins, as every great song begins, in the heights above human life. It begins with *God.* It is a vision to begin with, of the glory of God and of the greatness of the sky which over-arches this common life of ours. There is no great melody which can be brought up from the earth, unless, before you begin to sing or give that melody any sort of expression, the great sky somehow steals in, and the atmosphere of the infinite expresses itself in all the complexities of our own finite music. God, after all, must be the great fact in human life; behind life and before life and above life, before life itself can be melodious. And every David and every Cromwell, who stands, to-night, before any serious juncture of affairs and feels the impress of the critical moment upon his soul, must always begin the song that will bear him to victory, as the flash of his eye gathers unto itself a vision of the eternal God. It is the sky that makes the world. Out of the sky there come the rainfall and the sunlight, and it is what is above your head, and not what is below your feet, which is of primary importance in this human life of ours. God alone makes humanity significant.

Tell me, to-night, what your God is, and I will tell you what kind of a world you live in. If you have a God in the sky above you, powerless in the midst of

injustice, you will live as if you must believe that injustice has the right to rule here below; but if your God is the God which sweeps into vision in David's song, if your God is the Almighty Power who stood above all the complexities of the affairs in the time of Charles I. and Oliver Cromwell, you are sure to believe that justice ought to come and do its work in the name of righteousness and God, and that, because justice will come to do its work, injustice shall depart, defeated, from the field. Tell me that your God is a great vengeful deity, a sort of omnipotent autocrat ruling yonder, without feeling, with pride in his own strength, gathering up to himself, through infinite ages, the everlasting splendors around his own throne, with no tenderness, no enterprising love, no down-reaching affection which goes out to the weakest of his creatures, and I will tell you what kind of a world you will have, what kind of government you will allow, what sort of man you will ultimately come to be; for, after all, the melody of life, if it is a melody at all, must begin yonder in the skies. If you have that sort of God, you will be an autocrat yourself, you will allow an autocrat to rule over you in human affairs without mercy and without tenderness, without any of that rugged justice which comes on embassies of delicate and tender but heroic enterprise, without a kind heart which beats for others. Your own life will go on, and you will be simply repeating, in small measure, the earthly vision that you have of your God in the sky.

Here was a vision of God that swept into this old warrior with such tremendous power that it gave him to see the meaning of his own life; the meaning of his life's problem; and he saw, as never before, what his business was in the world and what his God and Father was trying to do with him. The simple statement of it all is this: He saw that God, in the heights above and in the life all around him, was making a tremendous demand upon him. Here, there, and everywhere these invitations and commands were surrounding him. They appealed to him with every sort of eloquence; asking the strength he had, beseeching the force that he might summon, inviting out into ten thousand fields of opportunity and enterprise. The demand was upon every energy of his being, and, oftentimes, when he seemed to have no energy, God would put in front of him great mountains of difficulty to climb, awful rivers of sorrow to cross, immense desert lands through which he must walk—if he would walk at all—with all the agony and sorrow of his footsore enterprise, with all the weariness which would come from his seeming powerlessness.

David saw all that, and then, looking into the nature of his God, he said, "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." And the secret of many of the difficulties of our life is this, that God wants all the power we have and is interesting himself in the development of the very trifling strength which we possess. These mountains which I have to climb, these surging rivers which I have to cross, these difficulties which I stand before and must fight everywhere, mean only this: God is commanding my strength.

You will see at once, dear friends, in the first place, what a splendid vision this gives you of our human life and of God's purpose in human life. The great thing to which the Almighty Ruler of this universe looks is human character. The sight under heaven dearest to God is the human soul developing itself into greatness, into loveliness, into power. This is the vision which has filled the eye of Almighty God from the beginning.

You go down into the depths of nature with your best books on evolution, and you will come up through nature with the feeling that when man comes, he is the crown and flower of it all; and, then, when you go into human character and look into its complexities and behold the questions which demand answer, and the difficulties which must be dealt with, the constant inflow of power and the constant outgo of strength, you say to yourself, "Why, there is a deep, great aim from the very

bottom to the top of this universe, that human character shall be the grandest and most true of all the products of creation. Human character is the only aim that God has had from the beginning, along which his purposes have been traveling, and toward which end he is working day and night.

We begin to see, in a thought like that, the meaning of each life, and of each of life's difficulties, oh how plainly! And, dawning upon your life, there is the great thought that God aims everywhere at human character, and then you say, "What is character?"

Why, in order to have human character, I must have something that the star, which shines in the sky there, has not. The sun itself is obedient to the law. It cannot say *"no!"* it cannot turn its fiery path backward, it cannot in any single instance disobey one of the great laws of the universe; and by becoming a star I can never reach the loftiest height of human character. No, I must have the power within me of determination; I must have my own will and must be free in my intentions and desires. And the soul looks at itself again and says, "If I am ever to have character I must have something that yonder Niagara does not possess. It can bear a thousand rainbows in that beautiful spray that hangs like an emblem of immortality over it; it can dash itself into foam before my eyes and become a spectacle of delight; but not for an instant can that magnificent thing feel the thrill of life; not a drop of that water, in all its crystalline beauty, can feel one touch of life. And yet, I, in order to be a man, in order to reach human character, must have this force within me, this power of life." And, then, the soul looks at its problem again and says, "I must have something more than that. I can think." And, then, the glorious vision that I behold yonder, a mountain that stands there in splendor, upon which the sunbeams rest until it is all on fire, and the cone is crimson with the blaze, that mountain cannot think, not for an instant can it project a single idea. It cannot take two thoughts and deduce a third from them; but I can think, and because I can think, I must have *the truth,* and I must have it that I may live, that my brain and intellectual powers may have and attain real character. So the soul looks at the things it must have in order that character may come; then it looks into the world in which it is to live.

Oh, my dear friend, you have not looked very deeply into yourself, you have looked still more superficially into the world, if you do not see and know how clearly the very necessities of your being and God's way of leading you in this world, if you only will be led, are matched with all the wisdom of the Father and with all the affection which shines from the Great White Throne. Take the matter, for example, of gaining truth. Many of us act about getting truth as though we would like it if God had made every truth evident; if he had had all the truths written out in easy script, and had allowed us to have this truth, and that truth and the other truth, just as though they were put here and there in little boxes, and all we had to do is to go to the box where the truth is and get it in all its simplicity, without any sort of effort on our part. We say, "Why was it that, if God loved humanity, if God was really the Father, if he was tender, he did not save so many men and so many women from this agonizing search and long struggle after truth?" Just this, is the answer: Because he has loved humanity, because he has seen into the possibilities of the human race, "God has commanded thy strength."

Look at the nature of truth for a single instant. When is a thing *truth* to you? I cannot go to you and say, "My friend Jones, here is the truth and now you take that truth, and I want you to know that truth." It would never be as truth to you until it is true to everything in your nature, true to everything in your conscience, true to everything you know. How is it ever going to be the truest truth in the world to you? Why, you must come to it just as I did. Day after day, before I brought that truth to you, I saw her shining garment as she blazed yonder in the midst of

the darkness; and with every energy I had, with every power alert, I began the chase after the truth, and away through the thick darkness and over the deserts and across the plains, and climbing the mountains, I have pursued her, until her loveliness became more lovely, and her beauty more beautiful, and, at last, when she came to be mine, oh, with what intellectual ardor did that truth seem to be true to my nature! All the way along I had been getting truth; all the way along I had been growing more and more a man to receive her; all the way along her path I had been developing within myself those very qualities which would make that truth truer to me than ever before. God gives me the opportunity to search after truth and struggle for it, because God commands my strength. He will have me strong enough to hold the truth when I get it, and I must develop my strength by climbing here and there after it. A man who refuses heavy struggles, weariness of flesh, a man who does not know what it is to genuinely ache for truth, can never hold the truth when he gets it. It is not true enough to him to stay with him. He is not true enough to it to desperately and lovingly attach his life to it.

We wonder, some of us, in our lazy view of life, why there were not, in the beginning of life of man as he appeared upon the planet, steamboats on the lakes, railroads and telegraphs in the world, and great engines of fire and steam which would carry his enterprises to the ends of the earth. We wonder why there should be such long years of waiting for the printing press; why there should have been such weary blundering as that which preceded the invention of the telephone and phonograph. Why did not mankind find upon the earth at once, these instruments, so that men might have walked up to a telephone in the beginning in the Garden of Eden, and talked, if there had been anybody else in the world then to talk to?

Why, my dear friend, because God is not engaged in the manufacture of telephones. God Almighty's business in this world, let us say it reverently, is the making of manhood. That is what the world is for. This star swings to-night in the everlasting blue of our Father's purpose to make us sons of the living God. In order to do it he must bring us along these lines of development. Never can we get character until we get it by the development of these powers within us, through the difficulties which are placed before us.

You wonder, to-night, why you have a temptation. It is just because God is bound to make a man of you. You, with your pulpy character, without any sort of backbone, without any muscularity, simply flesh, and poor flesh at that, unable to take hold with any energy, how would God ever get you to stand up, how would you ever be able to hold yourself up in the midst of all the revolution of feelings that you would undergo? He must give you a temptation, such a temptation as will develop your power; the energies of your life must be developed in the fight; the strength of your character and nobility of your conscience must equal all your energies and the power of endurance that you shall have in faith; and when you wake up, whatever field you may have gained, nothing is so rich, nothing is so splendid, as the field you have inside, the great realm of manhood and womanhood which you have conquered for yourself, an addition which you have made to your own character and life, by the purpose and will of Almighty God. "Difficulties exist," says Emerson, "to be surmounted." That is precisely their reason for being. They come before the human soul as God's commands for our strength. They are the invitations, the compliments that heaven gives to human character. They are the intimations that God still believes that, by the power of his grace and through his processes, he may develop real manhood within us.

If we were to take this into our lives, some of us would find before us different pictures than the pictures that we have brought here to-night. My dear friend, if

God wanted your weakness, if he wanted to develop you in flabbiness and uselessness, he would take these difficulties away from you; you would have no barriers to climb, no soldiers of the enemy to fight, no difficulties to breast in the storm. But our God has commanded our strength, and manhood and character are to be won by taking hold of these difficulties which lie before us, and by conquering through the name and power of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Now, you wonder if I am going to remain entirely in the Old Testament with this theme. It is the glory of this Bible that it is a constant intimation, from the Old Testament with its truth, to the New Tesament with its fulfilment. Now you will doubtless say, "If this thing of being religious, and godly, and noble, is such as has been described, if it is only overcoming difficulties all the time, what was the use of that great event which is often lifted up before us against the dark, silent sky; the death of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ? Why did he go through the Garden of Gethsemane, if all this work I am to do? What was this atonement for? Why did God give the blood of his blessed Son to the world, if, after all, by constant laboriousness, these difficulties have yet to be overcome?" My dear friends, your question shows the superficial view of your look into life, and shows how narrow a view you have of the broadest fact in the world: the Atonement.

"Thy God hath commanded thy strength." There never was such a command for the power of man, as the command on the Cross of Jesus Christ. Look yonder! There is a noble man standing in the midst of a lot of ignoble fellows, and they are standing round about him with no understanding whatever of his ability or nobility, and all at once, right in the presence of their ignoble lives, this man does such a noble thing, he does a thing that is so grand and divine in its own nature, that every man feels within him the command in his soul to do a noble thing too. More eloquent than any orator, more musical than any singer, more splendid than any manifesto of government, is the command to follow out the desires that yonder man has created in those ignoble souls, within whom the nobility leaps up to do that which ought to be done.

There is vastly more in the Cross of Christ than an appeal to nobility, more in that sacrifice than a mere commandment for your power, for that cross is the throne of Jesus Christ. He came into the world to be King. We heard that song of his kingship to-night, and, I am sure, under its inspiration, we received some finer intimation of the kingship of Jesus Christ. But he had no other throne than that Cross. There he died; there his figure stands, the dearest figure on earth. And no throne that the world ever saw has exercised the influence upon mankind which that throne, which he chose, has exercised over human hearts. To-night we look there, and we see him exercising unparalleled sovereignty, a King of kings and Lord of lords. But what is his commandment? It is the commandment of Almighty Love; it is the commandment for your power and my power. It is a commanding inspiration.

"Why," you say to me, "did not Jesus *pay it all,* all the debt I owe? Is it not true that that Atonement washes away every sin? Is it not so, that I can do nothing in myself?" Certainly, Jesus did pay it all, but you have gotten into debt since; Jesus did pay it all, but you are a bankrupt to begin with after he has paid it all. You begin with minus quantities; you begin life at your grandest after the Atonement has done its work of washing away your sins; you begin with a nature that needs something else besides payment of an old debt. "Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe"; but to-night I want the power to keep out of debt in the future. And, above all things that the human soul wants, is some commanding force that will bring out those strengths that lie in human nature, that must be developed, else character will fall to pieces. So the Cross stands there, and out of it is developed

every strength of the human soul. The moment I see Jesus Christ lifting up his hands in holy benediction over his enemies, my soul says, "I can do that." I look at him, and a command, richer and deeper than any law of earth, comes upon my manhood, and I say, "I will do that with my enemies." And when I look yonder upon that Cross, and see Jesus Christ carrying with it the burdens of others, I say, "I can do that," and upon my shoulders rest these burdens that have been so burdensome hitherto that I have hated them, and I begin to feel now that my burdens are my glory and my strength. He has commanded my power, and my power has responded with every energy of my soul.

So, tonight, dear friends, as we sing of heaven and think of heaven, let us sing of it and think of it as the last grand manifestation of God's great educational method, to our souls, in the development of our strength. "Why!" you say, "that is not my idea of heaven. I came here, to-night, to be told that heaven is a place to rest in." I never knew a soul who put untrue emphasis upon that word "rest," above all others, who was not continually talking about meeting dear earthly relatives instead of God himself, in heaven. You constantly hear those people who have difficulties, and who regard their difficulties as inventions of the devil, talking about the long, long, sweet rest which they will have in heaven. What will they rest from? What have they ever done? Never a struggle! never a trial! never a sorrow! Oh, we must *do* something! God asks for our best ability.

My friends, it is precisely that low conception of heaven which grows out of our indolent conceptions of life, that we must get rid of. Rest has its benedictions and joys for those who have had grand ideals, and have developed them. What, to-night, my dear friend, is your life costing you? What do your ideals cost you in effort? Is your life a struggle? No! Then go home and make it a struggle. Feel that this is the world in which God is to develop you by commanding your strength.

I often think of that last, grand word in the life of Lord Nelson. You remember when the ships had sailed into the harbor, and the victory had been won, when, at last, Nelson's eyes were filled with tears, there was one more splendid victory still to come into his hands. Yonder floated the red tri-color of France; there gleamed the sunlight, with the intimation that there was just time for another triumph. Nelson knew that the ships of the enemy, which had all been left behind, contained grain, and he knew that those ships would surely feed the enemy should they come upon his rear. He also knew that what he needed, above everything else in the world, was frigates, and he said: "If I should die at this moment, there would be found engraven upon my heart, 'want of frigates.'" Day after day he looked into that dark conclusion, victory gleaming nowhere, until, at last, with all the power of his nature, he cried out: "Want of frigates! That is the danger of the hour."

How many a man, to-night, needs an ideal! Some of you have won victories over your enemies. I know a man who asked to have buried by his side a certain bottle that meant to him the possibilities of damnation, as now that bottle meant a memory of the past which he had forever left. There are many of us, to-night, also, who have businesses in which we have been engaged, which for a little time we have left, but we have left them in the hands of the enemy. Do you know that there is not a villainous passion in your soul, a low ideal in your nature, my brother, that won't come back there and feed in those ships which you once won from the foe? Nelson, what you want to-night is frigates! On your heart it ought to be engraven: "Want of swift, splendid, fighting ideals." Old ideals that have gone must be supplanted with new ideals. The ships which you have left behind, the ships which you have taken from your enemy, the ideals which you have captured, they will not fight for you, and with them you cannot win a victory. Oh, if only you can put

into the sky an ideal of life that commands your power, that taxes every energy of your hand and heart and conscience, then the grandeur of human life will begin. God commands us through the ideals he sets before us.

I love to think of Nelson, as he was buried yonder in St. Paul's with his coffin made out of the mast shivered in the storm of war, the mast of *Le Orient.* Every true soldier of God is buried with some sort of recognition of the victories which he has won. The last, last thing that many a saint of God wants to see, is the mast of the flagship which he took from the enemy of his soul.

May God help us to live heroic lives, to be ready, to be educated, to take difficulties, and sorrows, and trials, and misunderstandings, as if they were the Divine opportunities for our power, and thus to become godlike through the strength of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

THE ALTERNATE ATTRIBUTES.

A. J. GORDON, D.D.

The Lord is slow to anger and great in power and will not acquit the wicked. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.—Nahum i: 2.

It is a constant habit of the prophets to alternate between judgment and mercy in their utterance of revelation. As though the prolonged dwelling upon God's sterner attributes would put too great a strain upon the heart, they change the tone after a little and so relieve the tension. "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth," says the prophet in the opening of his prophecy, and in the next section we read, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble." Thus, like a revolving lighthouse which throws forth a flash of brightness and then a blank of darkness, prophecy manifests to us alternately the love, and the justice, and the tenderness and severity of God that we may not forget the one while contemplating the other.

I. Consider the slowness and strength of God's anger. "He is slow to anger, but of great power." This is grandly characteristic of God. A quick temper is a mark of smallness of nature. A misstep on the side of an Indian's canoe will capsize and swamp it, but it will not affect a great ocean steamer in the slightest, and if you tread on the dignity of small and selfish people they immediately get angry and lose their temper, but a calm, self-poised person is not disturbed by any such affront. And so I think it a very sublime saying concerning Jehovah that he is slow to anger. The majesty of omnipotent restraint holds him in calmness and self-possession while sinners insult and provoke him to wrath. Why does not God blast and consume the infidel blasphemer with the lightning of his indignation? we ask.

When a noted atheist once, lecturing before a Boston audience, took out his watch and holding it in his hand said, "If there be a God, let him prove it by striking me dead in five minutes," some Christians wondered why the Lord did not do it. As well wonder why Queen Victoria does not halt the royal procession in which she

is riding to cuff the ears of some rude boy, who because he has imbibed anarchistic notions has come out to mock and make faces at his sovereign. There is a sublime fitness in the Divine delay to punish sin. And when unbelievers taunt you with the word of scripture—"God is angry with the wicked every day"—saying, "Then your God is a quick tempered deity, is he?" you may reply, "Though our God is sometimes angry, he is neither hot headed nor passionate." And so far from divine wrath being something out of harmony with the character of a righteous God it is absolutely necessary to our conception of such a being, for in the first place every attribute must have its counterpart. As there can be no light without darkness, so there can be no mercy without judgment. God is not a hemisphere with a single pole—love, on which all his being revolves. If he were, then he would be imperfect. Nay, there are two poles to his nature—justice and mercy, and because of these a zone exists in which warmth of love is modified by the severity of justice, so making a climate that is bracing as well as balmy.

Therefore what does God who requires us to be like himself enjoin upon us? "Love your enemies?" Yes, and also, "Be ye angry and sin not." And what is the high commendation which he puts upon his Son as he returns victorious from the redemption battle? "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." This combination of opposite attributes is absolutely necessary so long as good and evil are found side by side in the world, for anger is the repulsion of holiness, of truth from error, of light from darkness, of right from wrong. The peril is always upon us that in our weak toleration we allow these antagonistic elements to become reconciled. Therefore God is very emphatic, saying, "Ye that love the Lord hate evil."

But I must remind you that the righteous hatred enjoined, discriminates between sin and the sinner. God may punish a sin with his right hand while he offers pardon to the sinner who did it with his left. Indeed, I conceive that this is exactly what he does in the work of redemption. On the cross Christ extends a nail-pierced hand toward God, bearing in it full satisfaction for a broken law, while he reaches down a nail-pierced hand to us, proffering a full forgiveness for our sin. It is just this which gives such strength and security to the believer in Christ. Such a one is not simply forgiven, but he is justified—that is to say, judgment and mercy concur in his release from punishment, and both unite in pronouncing him free from condemnation.

II. *The slowness and sureness of God's judgments.* "He is slow to anger and will not acquit the wicked." God does not pay at the end of the week, but he pays at last. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," says the scripture. We may be sure, therefore, that when the work of sin is done the wages of sin will be paid. And yet because God does not declare a dividend every year on investments of wrong-doing, men conclude that there is nothing likely to accrue. The truth is very graphically set forth in the Book of Ecclesiastes, "I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone, in the place of the holy, and he was forgotten in the place where he had done so." Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

That is to say, men reason thus: "Here was my neighbor who was selfish, penurious and self-indulgent. He went to church every Sunday, but instead of bearing the cross and enduring hardness, as good soldiers of Christ are commanded to do, he had both hands full of the world and was dissatisfied that he could not get more. And this man lived happily and died easily. I am sure, if that is the way things go, it does not pay to practice self-denial and to forsake all to follow Christ." Thou fool! Have not you read the scripture enough to know that this present time is

not God's payday? And are you so shortsighted as not to understand that because you cannot immediately cut the coupons of blessing from the bonds of self-denial, therefore there is no interest to come to you? O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written! "Ye shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just," says Jesus. "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give to every man according as his work shall be," he says again. The time of our Lord's return is the day of our reaping and recompense—not now.

Miserable proverb of this world it is that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." I will let the bird fly out of my hands, though its wings be covered with silver and it is ready to lay me eggs of gold if I can have the bird in the bush—even the bird of Paradise that sings among the branches of the tree of life, which grows by the river of the water of life. In other words, I would rather have a heart that sorrows with the sorrowful now, if I may have a heart that can sing with the blessed hereafter.

Therefore let us remember these two things: First—The slowness of God is not slackness. When we see how judgment is perverted in the world, evil crowned and goodness crucified,

> Right forever on the scaffold,
> Wrong forever on the throne,

we cry out in impatience for judgment, saying with the martyrs under the altar, "How long, O Lord, holy and just, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell upon the earth?" But the calm and reassuring word that breaks upon our ears, as uttered by Peter, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promises as men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any man should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "At 12 o'clock," says a father to his disobedient son, "the limit will be reached. If you do not repent and confess your wrong before that hour, the punishment which I have threatened must come upon you." And yet his heart yearns for his boy, and every instinct of parental affection relents from inflicting chastisement. How he holds his eyes away from the clock that he may not see that the fatal hour has come! How he persuades himself that its time is fast that he may give a few minutes' grace! He even lets the hand slip by a little, hoping that he may hear the longed-for word of penitence. So, my hearers, God lets the dial hands on the plate of eternity move by and holds back the bell from striking that he may yet give space for repentance. Slackness, do you say in your presumption? Nay, it is the slowness of tender compassion. It is the reluctance of fatherly tenderness. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

And, remember, that silence is not forgetfulness. That youth who stole out at midnight to commit some wanton sin is encouraged because God seemed to take no notice of his wrongdoing. That clerk who has been pilfering from his employer is emboldened because his plan for concealment has prospered. That respectable man congratulates himself because, though practicing secret sins, he is just as greatly respected as ever. But listen to the warning of the Son of God, "There is nothing hid which shall not be manifested; neither is there anything kept secret which shall not come abroad." Turn on the lights, and all that was unseen in the room becomes instantly visible. And when "the Lord shall descend from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," illumination as well as judgment will come, revelation as well as retribution will begin, and next to the terror of punishment will be the terror of having all our sins laid bare and exposed to the gaze of the whole world. Oh, my hearers, are your sins under the blood?

III. *The slowness and swiftness of God's vindications.* "The Lord is slow to anger; the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind." To this correspond the words of Christ, "And shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him?" The whirlwind is not merely a symbol of sudden wrath, but of sudden vindication. Do you not remember how it was with Job? After the miserable prophesyings and criticisms of his three friends, in which they added this injury to all his other injuries, that of disparaging his character, and showing how richly he had deserved all that had come to him, suddenly we read, "And the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said." Then followed that sublime dialogue with the patriarch which ended in his complete vindication and the confounding and rebuking of his sanctimonious friends.

Here is a wonderful lesson for our faith. It is the darkest just before day, and so it is calmest just before a storm. They say that there is a strange and unwonted stillness when a whirlwind or a cyclone is about to break upon the earth. Pray on, Christian, who hast asked great things of God, knowing that he is able to do great things, even exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think. Instead of being swift to hear and mighty to save, it seems as if his ear were closed and the heavens were shut up as brass over your head.

Ofttimes when the trial of our faith has reached its limits, when a dead calm prevails in which the soul is ready to faint and swoon away into utter hopelessness, the Lord breaks forth in vindication and astonishes us by the greatness of his mercies. Therefore, O Christian, interceding with God for father and mother, for son or daughter, pray on. He is near and not afar off. He shall avenge you speedily. But as sure and swift as our vindication is, so sure is our punishment if we are found unprepared for the appearing of our Lord. How swiftly judgment comes at last! "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." Oh, be admonished, any of you who are living in unrepented sin! This world has been long confederated against God. Sin has become organized and thoroughly compacted, and evil doers congratulate themselves that they can transgress with impunity. Doth God know? Doth the Almighty see, they ask? Because no immediate retribution comes, the evil doer says that there is no judge of all the earth, or if there is that he takes no notice of their conduct. Not so, "for God shall bring every work unto judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil," says the scripture. He has long, indeed, been silent, and no audible voice has been heard from heaven. Tyrants have shed oceans of blood, and he has been silent. The public poisoners have slain thousands through strong drink, and he has been silent; and the Christian nations have brought ruin and death to millions through their opium traffic, and he has been silent. The betrayers of innocence and the destroyers of virtue have ruined other thousands, and he has been silent. But listen to the words of scripture: "Our God shall come and shall not keep silent. A fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous around about him." Be afraid, therefore, to sin and flee from it. Be afraid of God and run to his arms.

THE LIGHT OF GOD.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

It is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—2 Cor. iv: 6 (R. V.).

St. Paul evidently refers in this glorious sentence to the sublime passage, almost unparalleled in literature, with which the Bible opens. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Similarly, at the beginning of our existence our hearts are waste and void and dark. It is only after God has said "Let there be light," that light and beauty and happiness make their appearance. By nature our hearts are dark. By nature we are all agnostics. We do not know God. To us he is a mere name, and generally a name of terror. The rites of all earth-born, and therefore false, religions sufficiently prove that. It is quite evident that the natural idea of man is to offer some sacrifice by which he can propitiate God whom he regards as a savage despot. The prospect of death excites in man only nameless horror. Men, through fear of death, are all their lifetime in depressing bondage. We sometimes make believe that we are happy; but it is an exceedingly transparent make-believe. In our own day, for various reasons into which I need not enter now, some men are not specially conscious of the terror to which I have referred. But their life is very little better than a blank. There is an unfulfilled and aching void in their hearts. As St. Augustine discovered long centuries ago, man is created for God, and is never able to rest without God. Without God men are, as St. Paul said, without hope, and they not unnaturally regard life as the supreme calamity. If you, catching something of the spirit of the time, are not troubled and anxious, you are nevertheless oppressed by some unrealized aspirations, some unsatisfied desires. You are really athirst for the living God. But you are trying, and vainly trying, to quench your thirst at human fountains. The profoundest theological proverb of my native language, the Welsh, is still profoundly true: "Without God, without anything. God, and enough." Such is the brief, literal translation of a deep saying, which declares that God himself is the greatest and only absolute necessity of every man. If you, be you who you may, turn to your hard and weary heart, and put to it the straight, plain question, "What do you want?" and are willing to hear the answer, your heart will say, "I want God." But how shall we find him? The speaker in the Book of Job, thousands of years ago, exclaimed, "Canst thou, by searching, find out God?" Such knowledge is high as heaven, deeper than the grave, longer than the earth, broader than the sea. What canst thou do? What canst thou know? A great religious poet of our own day and country, in touch with the latest discoveries of human science, has echoed that saying:

"I found him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;

Nor through the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun."

And this earth, when it was, as I have read to you, waste and void and dead, did it discover the sun? No! All that the earth could do was to do what it has done in this part of England today—generate fogs and clouds, which hide the sun even when it is shining in its strength at noon-day. Man is as incapable of discovering God as the earth was of discovering the sun. The utmost that man can do is to confess his deep need of God, to admit that he has an aching void in his heart that he cannot fill, and then, like the Athenians of old, to erect an altar to the "unknown God." But when God says, "Let there be light," then, as at the creation, there is light. In the glorious language of my text, God "shines in our hearts," and the God-illuminated man can no more doubt the existence of God there than he can doubt his own existence. There are, as Cardinal Newman said, supreme moments of only two existences—God and self. Indeed, it is only whimsical philosophers who doubt the existence of one or the other; and it is a very remarkable thing that any man who doubts the existence of God doubts his own existence at the same time. If God is an illusion, so are you. Every real philosopher who doubts the existence of God necessarily and wisely doubts his own existence. As a matter of fact, you have precisely the same ultimate evidence of the existence of God and of your own self. If you reject one, you must reject the other.

On the other hand, nothing is more significant than the ease with which the unsophisticated mind accepts the existence both of self and of God. Nothing impresses me more than the wonderful fact that little children never find the least difficulty in believing in God. I should have anticipated that this would be most difficult. But, with divine insight, children, when they become conscious of their own existence, become conscious of the existence of God also, and it does not occur to them that there is any difficulty in either case. Difficulty arises only when, in after life, the child becomes capricious and tricky. I read to you the first verse in the Bible a few minutes ago, and there you remember the Bible assumes the existence of God—it never attempts to prove it. No wise person ever would attempt to prove the existence of God. God "shines in our heart,"—that is the only explanation. And to suppose that this evidence is less trustworthy than the knowledge which we receive through our fallible senses is about as unscientific and unphilosophical as anything can well be. Our senses are continually misleading us. Our consciousness never does. As a matter of fact, the knowledge or experience received through the physical senses involves quite as many postulates and assumptions as the knowledge of God, which comes direct to the heart. Nothing could be more utterly absurd than the attempt to distinguish between knowledge, which is apparently material in its origin, and that which is directly spiritual. For even in accepting physical knowledge we have to make great metaphysical assumptions. Therefore the evidence which I have in the depth of my soul of the presence and activity of God is more scientific than the evidence which I have that there is a congregation in St. James's Hall at this moment. My eyes may deceive me, my ears may deceive me; but my conscience and real experience cannot deceive me

All human history, from the divine standpoint, is a record of the revelation of God to man. The dazzling light of the eternal has been tempered to the tender eye of man. God has never left "himself without witness," as St. Paul says, "in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 17, R.V.). The same apostle says that "the invisible things of 'God' are seen through the things which are made." The universe, man, history, all things, are used by God as channels through which he

makes himself known to us. But the light has often been very dim, although, as St. John reminded us, it has never been quite "overcome" by the darkness. Now, the great object of this many-sided revelation from heaven is, as the text says, to make known to us the "glory of God." If a friend visits you, you like to show him your most valued possessions. If you are a gardener, you will take him to see the loveliest flowers in your conservatory. If you are an artist, you will take him to your studio and show him your best picture. If you are an author, you will place in his hands your favorite work. Now, God wishes men to know what he glories in above everything else; what he deems his best possession; what gives him more joy than anything else; he wishes to give us "the knowledge of his glory." What does he glory in? What does he wish us to know above everything else? Does he wish us to know his power? Certainly not. That might impress some. He placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Great loveliness was there, but no special manifestation of power. I observe that when foreign potentates visit princes they visit the arsenal, or the army, or the fleet, and thus form a great idea of their power. That is one of many particulars in which the King of kings is strikingly different from other kings. He put our first parents in the Garden of Eden, where there was no great display of power. He might have planted them on some solitary island where great tides leaped and roared. But he has never gone out of his way to impress men with his power. Neither has God ever sought to impress men with his wisdom, although that is unsearchable. It is only very lately that God has begun to unfold to man in a large degree the marvels of his wisdom. The exact sciences are exceedingly modern. It is only in our lifetime that God has permitted us, with such modern marvels as the microscope, the telescope, and the spectroscope, to find out the wonders of his wisdom. He was in no hurry to impress us with that. Nothing could be more absurd than the idolatrous worship of mere cleverness. We may be as clever and orthodox as the devil himself, and yet as wicked. God does not glory in his power or wisdom.

Let me tell you what God does glory in; what he has been trying to reveal to us from the very beginning; what he wishes us to know more than anything else. He wishes us to know that his very nature is love. He wishes to persuade us that he attaches a higher value to Love than to Power or to Wisdom; and where shall I find words to describe the rapture of mortal man when he discovers God is love? I wish I had brought with me one of the most glorious literary fragments I ever read. It is in the life of Henry Ward Beecher. He was brought up in a narrow, antiquated Calvinistic school; for a long time he groped in darkness and misery, and the name of God was to him a name of terror. But he tells us, with growing and overwhelming eloquence, how one memorable day it dawned upon him that God was love. In a moment the whole universe became radiant with new beauty. Everything was changed. He was changed. He passed from hell to heaven, and the light of that radiant moment never passed away. May God grant that every one of us may experience that now! Let us forget everything, that we may rejoice in the love of God with exceeding great joy.

Now, perhaps, we understand why and how the crowning and final self-revelation of God was in the face of Jesus Christ, "who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." All previous revelations were summed up and completed in the face of Jesus Christ. And while Peter keeps his eyes on the face of Christ he can never sink in the Sea of Galilee. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." There is life in that face. Whatever conception you have formed of God must be supplemented by that revelation of tenderness and pity which has now come to all men in the face of Jesus Christ. It was a happy hour for England and for the world when a young man in the eastern counties,

called Charles Haddon Spurgeon, first saw the face of Jesus Christ. He has told us the story of that ecstatic moment. He had wandered from one sanctuary to another, and had found no conviction anywhere. But as he went into a primitive Methodist chapel the preacher was giving out the text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth." And young Spurgeon, who was walking down the aisle, "looked," as he says, "and was saved." At once his sins were forgiven, and the experience of that glad hour has been reproduced in the happy lives of hundreds of thousands of men and women in all parts of the world. Oh, that at this moment some young man may look into the face of Christ as Spurgeon looked, and become, like him, a mighty preacher of the everlasting gospel! All fears and sorrows are borne down by a glance, when we lift our eyes and discover Jesus of Nazareth. I, too, saw him when I was a little boy. That is why I am here tonight.

But how is it that some of you do not enjoy this vision, do not experience that eternal life which consists in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent? St. Paul, in the context, gives an appalling explanation of the ignorance of some. He says the god of this world hath blinded them. Why? Because they are selfish. The devil whispers in their ears, "Look after number one. Please yourself. Never mind what your mother or the parson may say." And the young fool, listening to one who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning, is let captive by the devil into the darkness of sin. The selfish man loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil. So long have some been in the darkness that they have begun to lose the power of vision. You read in Professor Drummond's "Natural Law" of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, where the light of the sun never enters. In that cave are fish which possess organs of sight. But they have long ceased to see. Their sight is gone through want of use. And no power that you possess will live unless you employ it. If, in obedience to the devil, you continue to turn away from Christ, you will gradually lose the power of seeing him. But, thank God, it has not gone so desperately far as that with most of us. We have not lost the power of spiritual vision. What shall we do? Do? Do you wish the sun to stream into your face? Then look at the sun. What does St. Paul say? "It is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Then look at the face of Jesus Christ. The light will come streaming into your own face, and fill you with life and gladness. Look to Jesus! "There is life for a look at the crucified one!" Listen to his words: "I am the light of the world." Although it seems blasphemous for a Syrian peasant to say that, all men in some degree believe it today. In this island there are thousands of witnesses to the truth of my text and my teaching. He has saved us. This is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The stewards tell me there are more strange faces here tonight than on any other occasion. The weather has kept many of our own people away, and thus given visitors an opportunity of getting in. God grant that you may now behold the blue heaven of the mercy of God, and see the Sun of Righteousness which has arisen with healing in his wings! This is a season of the year when more young men come to London than at any other time. That, also, may partly explain the presence of so many unknown faces here to-night. There are scores, if not hundreds, of young men here from the country. Why should I wait till next Sunday week to speak specially to young men? The devil may have played havoc with you before then. Mr. Sarjeant said the other night that he had visited the classes, and had personal conversation with nearly every member of the Mission, and he had made the appalling discovery that at least 25 per cent of the thousand members of this Mission were backsliders. And the majority of these said that their backsliding began by neglecting private prayer and communion with God. And so

the light within them became darkness. When the light within you is darkness how great is that darkness! It can be felt. Young men and young women, be warned by the terrible fate of these. You may not be reclaimed, as they have been. Be warned in time. Let all be warned. You may now come back to God your Father if you have wandered away. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so is he lifted up, that you may have everlasting life. Every person who was bitten and looked at the brazen serpent was healed. And every man who looks now at Jesus of Nazareth, crucified for you on the cross, may be saved tonight. God grant that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God may shine in your hearts and in mine, now and for evermore.—Preached in St. James' Hall, Sunday evening, January 11, 1891.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

EDWARD IRVING.

And from the Lord Jesus Christ.—Eph. i:2.

The grace and peace with which Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ doth bless the saints at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus, proceedeth not from God the Father only, but equally and alike from the Lord Jesus Christ; and this same conjunction of the Father and the Son as the source and origin of all spiritual benefits, our apostle maketh not in one, but in all his epistles, and not he only but also the other apostles. We may never doubt, therefore, from this the constant style of holy scripture, that the two divine persons thus advanced into equal honor as the fountain of grace and peace, are to be equally acknowledged by the church, and witnessed to by the saints; that they may not and cannot be separated or contemplated apart: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." Therefore the gospel is by our apostle called "the mystery of God, and [both] of the Father, and of Christ," Col. 2:2). And by the apostle John it is declared, "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall also continue in the Son, and in the Father." (1 John 2: 24.) And again, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (Chap. 1:3.) Into that part and office in the mystery which the Father hath, we have inquired diligently in several discourses, and we do now propose, by the help of the Spirit, to testify unto the office of the Son, according as it is contained under his name, Jesus Christ the Lord. Into the mystery of his name, Jesus, we would then with all reverence first inquire.

The name Jesus being written at full length is Jehoshua, which consisteth of two parts—Hoshea, which was the original name of the son of Nun; and Jah, which was added by Moses when he sent him to spy out the land of Canaan. Hoshea is "savior," or "salvation"; on which account it is said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1: 21.) And Jah is a contraction of Jehovah, used singly to denote the whole force of that name in Ps. 68: 4, "Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Jah"; used along

with it to give it force and intensity, in two passages of Isaiah. The first is: "Behold, God is my salvation (Hoshea); I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord (Jah) Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation (Hoshea)." (Chap. 12: 2.) This is a very remarkable passage, both as containing the two parts of the name Jesus, Jah and Hoshea, and as declaring that the Jewish people in the day of their restoration shall say that Jah Jehovah hath become Jah Hoshea, or Jesus their Savior; and in consequence of this, their confession of the name of Christ, it is added, "Therefore with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation"; which I understand to signify their abundant and joyful partaking of the Holy Ghost. The other passage in which Jah occurs is to the same effect, and spoken of the same people against the same time—"We have a strong city: salvation (Hoshea) will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. . . . Trust ye in the Lord (Jehovah) for ever: for in the Lord (Jah) is everlasting strength." (Chap. 26: 1, 4.) This separation of Jah, a part of the name Jehovah, from the rest, and this use of it in the separate form always in connection with the idea of salvation, and hence with the very word Hoshea, I cannot but regard as a preparation for that combination and composition of the word into the one name Jehoshua, which in the type had been already done by an act of God's minister, and in the antitype was about to be done by the act of God himself. I observe further, that Hoshea had his name changed when he went to spy out the land of Canaan, the inheritance which God had by the covenant of Sinai set apart unto the seed of Abraham. The son of Nun had already, so to speak, won his name of "savior," by the various battles wherein God had given him to smite the enemies of Israel; but the name of Jehoshua he had to win for himself, by going into the enemy's land and bringing out of it a faithful and good report, which was to signify that the Son of God upon coming into this world, which God hath intended for an inheritance of his saints, should have the name of Jesus given to him, and should earn the like, not by reporting it able to be taken, but by purchasing it to himself out of the hands of the enemy, and acquiring the right to it for his people, against the dispensation of the fullness of the times, when the purchased possession shall be redeemed. These being the component parts of the name Jesus, let us now inquire into the meaning of each of them; for it is by understanding the name of the Son that we shall understand his person and his offices in the blessed trinity.

The name Jah or Jehovah is sufficiently explained to us in that which the Lord spake unto Moses from the midst of the bush—"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you," (Exod. 3: 14); which teacheth us that self-existent, underived, unchangeable, self-sufficient being is that which is contained under the name Jehovah: self-existent in himself, underived from any higher origin, and unchangeable by any cause; all-sufficient in himself, and therefore the origin, the changer, and the sufficiency of every other existing person and thing. This incommunicable name the Jews held to be unutterably sacred, and would by no means name it, but retained it in the mysterious holiness of impenetrable silence; and whenever it occurred in the text they pronounced in its stead some of the appellations of God—a fond conceit, which degenerated at length into a base superstition, yet worthy to be mentioned as teaching us the opinion of the nation that in this name lay folded up, as it were, the very essence and substance of that divine being, of whom all the other names expressed only the attributes. There might also perhaps be concealed under this rabbinical conceit another act of worship done unto Moses and the Mosaic economy, with a view to which this name was assumed: as it is written in Exod. 6: 3—"I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." This name Almighty, or

Elohim, is proper to God as the maker of all the creatures, ere yet he had revealed himself as the chooser out and redeemer of a part of the fallen creatures, and was most proper to preserve men from running into the worship of the creature, by continually declaring that it was made by another than itself; but when God began to manifest his purpose according to election by the calling out of Abraham, and his salvation of a church from the wrecks of fallen nature by the imputation of a righteousness not inherent in it, but derived from him, then he added to the name of God, the Creator of all, the special and peculiar propriety which he had in his chosen ones, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," and appointing the same for a memorial unto all generations; because this church portion, the saved portion of the fallen creatures, shall endure unto all ages, and constitute God's most excellent and glorious inheritance. But, at the call of Moses, being about to institute a covenant wherein he was to pledge himself to ten thousand things, whereof not one was to be perfectly accomplished until after a hundred ages of sore contradiction and oppression, he thinketh it good to take unto himself a name which shall be expressive of constancy and faithfulness in the highest possible sense—a name which every one that knew it might trust; a name which should signify the same yesterday, today, and forever. And this name is Jehovah, of which Jah, the essence, hath been compounded into Jesus. By which component part, therefore, it is signified that the Jehovah of the covenant was no other than the Son, the same Divine Person who animated the child of the virgin; and that all things which were spoken by Jehovah, Jesus undertaketh to fulfil. That word Jah, incorporated with Hoshea in the name of our blessed Lord, is to me a pledge that all things which are written in the law and the prophets the Son of man hath come not to destroy but to fulfill. And accordingly we do find that Jesus hath applied to him the essential meaning of Jehovah, which is independence on all outward causes, and unalterable by time, as in Rev. 13:8—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." And again (Heb. 1:10), quoting from Psalm 102, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." And, not to enumerate more instances, it is said of Christ (Rev. 1:8), what had just been said of the Father—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty"—an expression which some have thought to be no more than a translation into Greek of the Hebrew words Jehovah Elohim, or the Lord God. Unto this much have we attained, therefore, that all the might and holiness, all the magnificence of power and splendor of operation, all the faithfulness and immovableness of purpose, together with all words whatsoever written of Jehovah and the old dispensation, are the property of him who hath revealed himself under the new as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief the meek, the humble, and the lowly Jesus.

The second part of this blessed name Jehoshua is Hoshea, which signifies salvation, and was added to the name Jah when the person of the Son united itself to the substance of the fallen creature for the end of redeeming and saving it; wherefore in this form of the God-man, while yet only conceived but not born, he is called Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins." Though Jehovah had been known under the law as a great deliverer of his people from manifold oppressions, these deliverances had all been frustrated by their persevering disobedience, and they were now sold under the sorest bondage of all which they had ever proved, a bondage which endureth unto this day. He was known to them as yet, therefore, not as their Savior but as their Judge, and the avenger of their wickedness. Nevertheless,

in the mouth of all the prophets he had upon all occasions, and especially upon the eve of each new trial, assured them with the promise of a new and everlasting covenant, under which he would be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and would remember their iniquities no more, when the sin of Judah and of Israel should be sought for and should not be found; and when, together with all sin, all suffering and oppression should pass away. To execute these promises and to bring in this dispensation of eternal salvation, the virgin's son had been promised both by Isaiah and Jeremiah; and now that the virgin's child is conceived he receiveth the name of Jah Hoshea, Jehovah the Savior, to assure the faithful that he, and none but he, would accomplish all these things; and accordingly Zacharias, when his tongue was loosed, did prophesy of him in these words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people: and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David: as he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets which have been since the world began." To this deliverance not yet accomplished unto the Jewish people, to this salvation from their sins under the penalty of which they are still suffering, there can be no doubt that the name Jesus hath a primary reference, and that it was thus understood both by the blessed virgin and by the prophet Zacharias. It would not have been proper to the Jewish economy, still in existence, to have spoken otherwise of Messiah than as he had been spoken of by all the prophets; and if he had been spoken of to them in the higher sense in which we are now to contemplate his salvation, it would have been to them unintelligible. The sense I mean, is that in which all believers look upon him as their Savior in taking away their guilt and their judgment, and regenerating their natures, and raising them from the dead to the inheritance of eternal life and blessedness. In this higher sense of the Redeemer of the fallen creatures whom God hath chosen unto life eternal, the Jewish people were not privileged to perceive him otherwise than through the emblems of their state and nature, and by these emblems it shall yet be taught them against the day of their glory; but to us, taught by the Spirit, it is given to understand how Jehovah became the Savior that instant he united himself to the seed of the woman. In taking a part of the fallen creature into union with himself and saving that part from the pollution of sin, the corruption of the grave, and the power of Satan, he gave assurance that God was with him, and in him wrought this same thing for his own glory; gave assurance that he was both purposed and able to redeem and restore with greater glory the fallen creature, to save it from sin and death, to bless it with holiness and eternal life. When the Son of God took flesh, he entered upon the travail of salvation; when he carried that flesh triumphant to the right hand of God, he finished the work. By saving his own human nature, by preserving it from the taint of sin, by delivering it from the power of Satan, by carrying it into the region of glory, he did obtain eternal redemption for us, he did receive power to destroy him that had the power of death, and to deliver all them who through the fear of death were subject to bondage. This power of saving others proceedeth from his saving of himself. He voluntarily brought himself into peril by taking to himself our nature; by being incarnate he became the champion of our salvation, by enduring the incarnation and overcoming all the creature's fallen condition, he accomplished our salvation; and from thenceforth he standeth alone the head of salvation, as he had been the head of creation—not only Jehovah Elohim, the Lord God, but Jehovah Hoshea, the Lord the Savior. Now this voluntary peril which the Son of God undertook was for the greatest ends of the creature's glory and of the creature's well-being—seeing God's glory as the Creator had been obscured, and the creature's goodly condition subverted by the fall; and therefore Jehovah is not fully manifested as the Savior until all the effects of the fall shall have been clean wrought out of creation, and the handiwork of God shall stand sinless and glorious

forever. The name Jesus, therefore, carries us far beyond anything which we behold as yet accomplished, into the future everlasting condition of God's works, when everything that defileth and maketh a lie shall be purged off into the second death of the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever, and the heavens and earth which now are defiled and obscure shall with all their inhabitants, in the estate of infallible blessedness, acknowledge Jehovah their Creator to be also Jehovah their Savior. Save upon that human nature which he assumed, I may say that the virtue and power of the name Jesus hath not yet been exhibited. In this kind the whole work has been finished by the wonderful act of taking our nature, and going down with it into the region, first, of all temptation, and next of the grave, or all corruption, and thence fetching it up and seating it in the place of all honor and all blessedness. This exaltation which will yet be done upon all the chosen ones of God, and upon all that dependeth from them in their several degrees, hath as yet been only partially done upon any one of the saints, whose souls, though they be in glory, have left their bodies under the corruption of the grave—sad memorial of their sinfulness! And we who being now in the body have the first fruits of the Spirit, do nevertheless groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body: and all the creatures groan and travail together under bondage, waiting for that same glorious manifestation of the sons of God. And if so be that the name Jesus implies salvation from that curse and thraldom of sin under which the creation is now fallen, who will say that the name will be acquitted of its full blessedness until the bodies of the saints be brought up from their graves, and the world delivered from the headship of Satan and the power of death? Now as his being born of the virgin, and manifested as the seed of David, gave the beginning to the great work of our salvation, considered as shut up and represented in his human nature; and as the resurrection of his body from the dead gave the beginning to the work of conveying and communicating the same salvation to an elect few individuals in the gift of the Holy Ghost; even so his work of saving the Jewish nation from the hand of all their enemies will be the beginning of the work of delivering mankind from the dominion of Satan, and his being brought again into the world shall be the signal for delivering the bodies of his church from the power of the grave. After which it only remaineth that by the judgment he should deliver all things created from the power of death; and then is the glorious name of Jesus, or Jah the Savior, acquitted of its most precious burden.

Thus have I endeavored, dear brethren, to set forth unto you the meaning of the name Jesus, which the Godhead assumed in the act of taking unto itself the substance of the fallen creature, in order to save what of the fallen creatures it pleased him to save. And now I would, by the grace of God, endeavor to draw out from what hath been said certain conclusions of doctrine and practical inferences, which the Lord may be pleased to bless unto your edification in knowledge, in faith, and in new obedience.

First, then, it is manifest from God's revealing himself as Jesus, or the Savior, that the creatures are in a state of condemnation and of perdition; otherwise what meaning were there in revealing himself as their Savior? As the name Elohim, or God the Almighty One, implies that every other one is not almighty, but of a limited power and subordinate place; and as the name Jehovah, or the Unchangeable One, implieth that all other beings are to undergo change and alteration according to his will; so doth the name Jesus, or Savior, imply that all other beings whatsoever are in a state of condemnation and misery, from under which they need to be saved. And whence cometh this state of misery and perdition is distinctly and directly revealed in the act of giving unto him the name—"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Be it known unto you, therefore,

brethren, and of this be ye steadfastly assured, that our sins have divided between us and God, and brought us under the dominion of death and the grave, and the resurrection unto judgment, and the sentence of the second death, which nothing can avert, from which nothing can deliver and save us, but trust upon the name of Jesus, and believing in God as the only Savior from our sins. Put away, therefore, from amongst you all confidence which is elsewhere rested than upon the name of Jesus, and otherwise proceedeth than through faith in the incarnation, and obedience, and death, and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ. Be ye assured, that if God spared not his own Son when he had assumed our fallen nature, and become a partaker of flesh and blood with the rest of the brethren, he will not spare us who have no divine community of substance with the Father, who have no eternal generation by the Father, who have no inhabitation of the Father's bosom, and participation of his counsel, to interest the Father for our sakes; and if these being present in Jesus did not avert the sword of God from smiting the shepherd, oh, how think you that we rebellious creatures can ever escape if we should neglect such great salvation! If over him the law laid its line of righteousness, and its plumb-line of judgment, exacting obedience unto every jot and tittle of its holy, just, and good commandments, shall it, oh, can it, be relaxed unto such as we are! If the holiness of God was not prevented from its action and infliction upon him who was the manifestation of his love, and grace, and glory, how shall it, how can it be silent, be inactive, be changed towards us, who are manifestations of rebellion, ingratitude, unfruitfulness, and sin! Say then, believe then, know then, and be assured that in the way of God's holiness and justice, in the way of his law and our obedience thereto, there is nothing but condemnation and perdition forever and forever. Acknowledge this, and have no confidence in the flesh, or in the powers of the natural man. Say, "I am indeed a sinner, and the chief of sinners; my righteousnesses are as filthy rags; in all things I come short of the glory of God; in my best estate I am but vanity. I have been feeding upon the east wind while I trusted in my own works; and I shall continue to feed on the east wind, be parched, be blighted, be shrivelled up like the tree of the wilderness over which the east wind bloweth, so long as I shall look for any righteousness or hope for any salvation through anything which I can do for myself, or which others can do for me. I am a condemned man; I can ask no second trial; my mouth is shut, my doom is written, my fate is sealed." This, even this, no less, is what I require of you to believe, and to feel as the just conclusion from the name of Jesus, which the eternal revealer of God, even the Son, hath taken unto himself under the gospel dispensation.

And now, in the second place, I call upon you to believe and to feel, that unto a world thus sealed and set apart unto condemnation God hath revealed himself as a Savior. As he did reveal himself its Creator, so now revealeth he himself its Savior; and this message of reconciliation hath he committed unto me his minister to make known unto you all, that albeit ye are guilty before him, and have no plea in your mouth, he is of such wondrous grace, and hath for the creatures of his hand such pitiful love and tender compassion, being a sovereign withal whom no one can question, saying, "What doest thou?" that he hath given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life; that he is in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. Believe, then, though all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, you are justified "freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." As in my former conclusion of doctrine

and practice I did entreat you to be separate from all creature trust, and to regard the whole creation of God as under the bondage of sin and death, lying in the wicked one; so now do I entreat and invoke you to look unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of your faith. Receive the grace of God by him preached, and from him proceeding forth. Receive the pardon of your guilt written in his blood and sealed with the key of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, which shutteth and no man openeth. As the prisoner no more doubteth when the reprieve of his sovereign cometh under the great seal of the kingdom by the hands of the king's proper messenger; so doubt ye no more, let the world doubt no more after it hath received the good news of salvation by the Son of God, to this very end appointed by his name Jesus, and for the assurance of this very thing constituted by his union, his inseparable and indivisible union with the nature of the creatures which had been imprisoned under the sentence of the law of the Jehovah King, the Unchangeable One. Ah! is it not as if to some poor, doubting, disbelieving woman under sentence of death, the king's son, that he might give her fast assurance and chase away her despair, should wed himself to her, join himself as one, that her poor fainting heart might be reassured? So did Christ, in order to convince the children of mother Eve, who in their mother's transgression had transgressed, and in their mother's sentence had been doomed, come and wed himself, his eternal divinity, unto the seed of mother Eve, that the family, all the family, might truly know and feel assured that they had found grace in the sight of God, and were beloved because he is love, and can love what in itself is all unlovely. And now I ask you to believe that you are saved in Christ; to rejoice and hold up your heads, because you are redeemed; to go on and rejoice, and prosper, and do exploits under that banner of salvation which he hath displayed because of the truth.

And now, finally, with respect to the manner of conveying this salvation which he wrought out by his obedience unto the death, we have to observe that it is not by giving out of himself unto another, but by bringing that other into himself that the communication of the blessedness proceedeth. To give unto us an existence out of himself is the work of creation. To bring the thing created into union, into oneness with himself, is the work of redemption, which therefore proceeded by joining unto himself, by taking up into hypostatical union with himself the nature of man. And every one who is redeemed is in like manner taken up into union with his human nature, so as to be one with him as he is one with the Father. But this union of the redeemed ones unto Christ is not of the same kind as the union of his human nature unto his divine. The human nature of Christ is a part of his person, and shall continue so forever; but not so is it with his saved ones, who are separate persons from Christ, though of the same substance with his human nature unto which they are consubstantiated by the Holy Ghost proceeding from him to this very end of bringing them into union with him, just as the seed of plants hath power to assimilate unto itself the elemental substances on which it feeds, and so to produce many seeds and many plants of the like kind. Or to preserve our similitude still more correct, as the one stem of the vine hath power through the appropriation unto itself of elemental matters to put forth many branches, whereon grow the clusters of ripe fruit; so doth Christ, the true vine of the Father's planting, of the Father's dressing, by operation of the Holy Spirit upon the creature produce many separate persons in his own likeness, many branches growing out of and unto himself. In their union with him standeth their fertility, and being separated from him they are good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of men. The Holy Spirit, therefore, which proceedeth from Christ doth unite us unto Christ, and enable us to abide in him—doth not unite us into the Godhead of the Son, but doth unite us to the manhood of Christ. And the completeness of the saved

ones will be accomplished at his coming; after which, if I err not, the manner of this salvation will somewhat change. For I reckon there is a dignity and a closeness in the union between Christ and his elect or bridal church which now is suffering with him and for him, that there is not between him and the numerous hosts which shall come and be joined unto him in the age to come, of which he is declared to be the Father; whereas of the church that now is, he is the husband. But still as the children are of the same substance with their parents, so shall the innumerable company of the saints in the age to come be taken out of the stock of an evil nature subject unto death, and brought into the stock of a redeemed nature which hath triumphed over death; and so all the saved ones are saved by being taken out of the sinful mass and consubstantiated with that atom, so to speak, of redeemed substance which the Son joined unto himself, and which the Father gave to have life in itself. And as Christ the great quickener, the eternal life manifested, doth thus draw unto himself those whom the Father giveth him out of that separateness and wickedness in which they are by nature, and so doth save them in himself, not out of himself; even in like manner do these same saved ones draw up along with them this world which was made for man, with its sun, and moon, and stars, and fish and flying fowl, and living creatures, to the utter exclusion of death and extinction of sin and misery; and then the work of creation will appear to have been but the rudiments of and preparation for the work of redemption by the manifestation of Jehovah under the name of Jesus.

And now, brethren, before I close, allow me to express, in a few words, the heartfelt satisfaction with which I return to my charge over your souls, and to the labors of the ministry in this city. The tidings which I received from time to time of your love and fellowship in the Lord, of your constancy in the duties of public worship, did afford me great consolation in my absence; and a good report concerning you is, I may say, spread abroad amongst the churches. In which let us rejoice together. Let us remark with gratitude the hand of God in sending amongst us ministers of good and honorable report, in whose mouth the substance of the doctrine which I teach hath been confirmed. And now let us proceed with renewed confidence in the great Head of the church, to hold up in this city a banner for the truth. Let us go on unto perfection, and not stop until we reach the stature of a perfect man in Christ. You may desire naturally to know what reception the word which I preached met with in our native land and in our mother church. Everywhere, I may truly say, the people heard me gladly, and from the ministers of the gospel I received much brotherly kindness; for all which I return thanks this day to the great Head of the church. I preached unto them the coming of the Lord in judgment, little thinking that I should witness any act of his judgment; but so it was, the Lord did lift up his hand and make a breach in the midst of the congregation. It is a fearful thing, let me tell you, brethren, to witness such an awful sight; but oh, if those days of judgment and of visitation be so near at hand, what sights more awful await our eyes! If those days be at hand concerning which it is said, that unless they were shortened no flesh should be saved, oh, then, what death, what destruction, what ruin, may we not be prepared to see! Enter, oh enter, then, into your chambers, ye people of the Lord, and shut your doors and hide yourselves as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast. Have I not preached unto you this day the name of Jesus, that Rock of refuge and high tower of salvation? Flee unto him speedily, speedily, who hath been the dwelling-place of his people in all generations. Everything shall change but Jehovah, everything shall perish which is not united unto Jehovah the Savior. There is no other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved but the name of Jesus: and every one who knoweth his name will

put his trust in him. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Amen and amen.

[In power of originality and eloquence as in stature, *Edward Irving* towered amidst English preachers a half century ago. In De Quincey's words, he was "unquestionably, by many degrees, the greatest orator of our times." His sincerity and piety are evident; yet the latter years of his ministry were embittered by indiscreet acts, arising, perhaps, from partial insanity. He was born at Annan, Scotland, in 1792, and was educated at the University of Edinburgh. For three years he was an assistant to Dr. Chalmers, in Glasgow, and in 1822 was installed in the Scottish Presbyterian Church, London. Here he enjoyed unbounded popularity, till his encouragement in his congregation of unintelligible rhapsodies as utterances of the Spirit, and alleged misstatements of doctrine, led to his ejection by the Presbytery on the charge of heresy, in 1832. Thence arose the Irvingites, with whose conceits he had little to do. He died in Glasgow of consumption, December 8th, 1834.]

THE GENERAL CONFLAGRATION.

JOHN LELAND.

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!—2 Peter iii: 10, 11.

I have already entered upon the consideration of this remarkable passage, in which, first, it is asserted that there is a time approaching, here called the day of the Lord, when this world, and all things in it, shall be destroyed by fire. Secondly, that this day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. And then we are directed to the proper improvement of this great event. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

The first of these was considered in my former discourse. A representation was made, following the light the scripture affords us, of the general conflagration or dissolution of the world by fire. We endeavored distinctly to inquire into the awful and pompous description here given of it by the apostle Peter, that the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.

I now proceed to the second thing here observed, and that is, that this day of the Lord, in which the world shall be dissolved by fire, will come as a thief in the night. And there are two things which seem to be intended by this manner of expression.

First, that the precise time when this shall happen is utterly unknown to us. A thief does not send word beforehand at what time he will come. And Christ has not determined in his word the certain period in which we may expect him to put an

end to this present state of things. The day of the general conflagration, which in the text is called the day of the Lord, is in the 7th verse called the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. And our Savior expressly tells us, that of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. It is a secret which for wise ends God hath thought fit to conceal from every creature. Even the Son himself, *i. e.,* our Lord Jesus Christ, in his human nature did not know it whilst he was on earth in the days of his flesh; and this should silence a bold curiosity, and put a stop to all rash and presumptuous inquiries about it.

Secondly, another thing that is implied, when it is here declared, that this great day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, is, that it shall surprise the inhabitants of the earth, and strike them with a sudden terror when they least expect it. When the men of that generation shall be sunk into a deep carnal security and a very degenerate and corrupt state, the signs of the Son of man, the dreadful harbingers of approaching judgment, shall appear at once. The trump of God shall blow, and fill all the earth and the vast concave of the surrounding heavens with its awful and pompous sound. A fire shall go before him, and burn up his enemies round about. His lightnings shall enlighten the world, the earth shall see and tremble. The hills shall melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. It shall seem as if the frame of nature were seized with convulsive pangs and expiring agonies. And what tongue of man is able to express, or what heart to conceive the amazement, consternation, and dismay, that shall then overwhelm guilty mortals, even those of them that dared before to lift up their blasphemous mouths against heaven, and who seemed to have arrived at the highest degree of obstinate impiety! That this is one thing principally intended here in this expression of the day of the Lord's coming as a thief in the night, is plain from the account St. Paul gives of it, 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. Yourselves know perfectly (saith he to the believing Thessalonians) that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.

I now come to what principally concerns us, and that is, the practical improvement we should make of this important subject. For it is not designed merely as an amusing speculation to gratify our curiosity, but ought to have a proper influence upon our temper and conduct. This is what the Apostle Peter here directs to, when after having given a sublime description of the general conflagration, he adds, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

And first, the consideration of this should fill us with a holy fear of God, and with adoring thoughts of his infinite majesty, his almighty power and sovereign dominion. Thunder and lightning have in all ages been regarded as awful proofs of the irresistible power, majesty, and grandeur of the divinity. There have been instances of persons, who before made a scoff of all religion, who have been brought by violent thunders to serious thoughts of God, and a sense of the duty and worship they owed him. This is what one of the heathen poets owns concerning himself. Thunder is frequently represented in the Old Testament as the voice of God. The whole 29th psalm is designed to celebrate its effects in strains of the most exalted piety and devotion. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth. The voice of the Lord is powerful: the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness, it maketh the hinds to calve, and uncovereth the forest. But what are those thunders or earthquakes that are apt to fill us with amazement and dread, and which

are for the most part confined within narrow bounds, in comparison of the dreadful shocks and convulsions at the great day, when this whole terraqueous globe, and the surrounding heavens shall be rent asunder, and be involved in one general fiery ruin. Many of the ancient philosophers, who made high pretensions to learning and wisdom, when they beheld the constant revolutions of the heavens, and the stability of the course of nature, attributed this to a blind fatal necessity, rather than to the free appointment of a most wise intelligent cause; they maintained the eternity of the world in its present form, and that the heavens are incorruptible, and not subject to change. But how much juster and nobler is that of the psalmist, when speaking of the earth and heavens in his admirable address to God, Psalm cii. 26, 27, he expresseth himself thus: "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old as doth a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." The dissolution of this material world shall show that it did not make, nor is able to subsist and support itself by its own force. It is God that hath established it, and it shall continue only during that time which he hath assigned for its duration. With what reverence then should we adore that eternal majesty, who at first erected this vast and magnificent theatre by his almighty hand, and will at the appointed season change and take it down, and put an end to this present state of things! Let all the earth therefore fear the Lord, and all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Psal. xxxiii. 8. Shall such impotent worms as we are, creatures of yesterday, that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, dare to oppose our wills and appetites to his will and to his authority? He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, as Job speaks: "Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger: which shaketh the earth out of his place, and the pillars thereof tremble." Yea, as it is elsewhere expressed, the pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. Who knoweth the power of his anger? Not to fear what man can do unto us, when we are engaged in a just cause, argues a noble fortitude, and a true greatness of mind; but not to fear God, who at first created, and can destroy a world, is not courage but madness. How careful therefore should we be not to expose ourselves to his just wrath! how desirous to secure an interest in his favor! And, blessed be his name! he encourageth and inviteth us to lay hold of his offered grace and mercy. Hear what he himself saith by his prophet, Isa. xxvii. 4, 5. "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Sweet and comfortable words! Who would not be desirous to be at peace with this almighty Jehovah! And in order to this we must come to him in the way of his own appointment through Jesus Christ, who hath made peace by the blood of his cross, and through whom that gracious covenant is established, in which pardon and eternal salvation is freely offered to perishing sinners upon the most reasonable and condescending terms.

Secondly, the consideration of the approaching dissolution of the world should affect our hearts with a deep sense of the heinous evil of sin, and God's just displeasure against it. To make an open declaration of this to angels and men, seems to be one great end of this extraordinary and most amazing dispensation. This earth of ours has been, for some thousands of years, the stage on which the most abominable impieties, the most scandalous impurities, and all kinds of wickedness and acts of injustice and violence have been perpetrated; and therefore, as under the law, the walls of a house infected with the leprosy were to be pulled down; and as when persons were devoted to destruction for their wickedness, it was

sometimes so ordered, that all things that belonged to them were involved in the same ruin, and brought under the curse; so this earth which has so long been polluted with the sins of men, and on which the Lord of glory was crucified, together with the atmosphere about us, and, as some learned persons understand this passage, the whole solar system, of which man is probably the principal inhabitant, shall be dissolved in that great day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men: A day in which the evil angels also, which had so great a share in tempting men to sin, shall have their final doom and punishment completed. The sun, moon, and planets, which the nations regarded as deities, and to whom they generally paid an idolatrous worship, shall then appear to be unable to preserve themselves or their votaries. And what an awful idea must it give us of God's justice and purity, that even the inanimate creation itself, which had been abused to sin, shall bear the marks of the divine displeasure against it! If it was so dreadful to see fire and brimstone raining down from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and turning them into ashes, that they might be an example unto them that should hereafter live ungodly, as St. Peter speaks, 2 Pet. ii. 6, what will it be to see the whole earth, the elements, and the surrounding heavens in flames! How strange is the malignity of sin, that has such a tendency to spread ruin and confusion through the beautiful creation of God!

Thirdly, another use we should make of the doctrine before us, is, to moderate our desires and affections towards all things here below, and to give us an affecting conviction of the vanity and insufficiency of this present world and all its enjoyments to make us happy. To have a just sense of this is an eminent point of wisdom, and of great importance to the Christian character. For an inordinate love to this present world, and a too close attachment to the objects and enjoyments of it, is one of the greatest obstructions to a holy and virtuous practice; it is the principal source of our miscarriages, and tends to lead us astray in our whole course. But at the great day God shall draw a line of confusion and emptiness over the world, and all those things in it in which men are most apt to seek for happiness. Who that looks forward by faith, and beholds the fashion of this world passing away, and the whole frame of it dissolved at the general conflagration, can help pronouncing over it, Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Surely it would cast a damp upon our desires and pursuits after the most valued worldly enjoyments, seriously to realize to ourselves that awful day when all these things shall be consumed, together with their infatuated admirers. Shall we be proud of riches, or make gold our confidence, when we consider, that yet a little while and this earth, with all the riches contained in its bowels, the hidden treasures of gold and silver, and the repositories of precious stones, shall become a prey to the devouring flames? Shall we make our boasts of worldly honors and dignities, which shall so soon be at an end? Behold thrones tumbling, crowns and sceptres dissolving, the most magnificent palaces, and all the monuments of human grandeur turned into a ruinous heap! The raging flame shall not spare them any more than the meanest cottages. What shall then become of all the pleasures of the voluptuous sensualist? Are these the things that men lose their God and their souls for? Oh, ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity, and exhaust the vigor of your spirits in pursuing after that which shall shortly vanish in smoke, or fall into ashes? The destruction of the world furnishes this most instructive lesson to angels and men, that there is no stable happiness but in God alone. Without him this whole earthly globe, and these visible heavens, would be but a transitory portion. They shall perish, but he remaineth immutably the same infinite fountain of happiness, the stable everlasting portion of his people.

Fourthly, the last reflection I would make upon this subject is this, that since

there is a day coming when this world and all things in it shall be dissolved, and the precise time of it unknown to us, we should labor to be in a constant readiness and preparation for it. This is what St. Peter intends, when in the words following the text, he represents it as the duty of Christians to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." And again, verse 14. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." It is of infinite importance to us that we be found ready for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the day when he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire. If the earthquake and great darkness, and the rending of the rocks at our Savior's crucifixion, could cause even the heathen centurion to say, "Truly this was the Son of God!" how much more when the world shall be in flames, and this frame of nature rent asunder, at his second glorious appearing, shall even the most obstinate infidels be constrained to acknowledge and adore his power and majesty! Let us therefore, now whilst there is a proper opportunity for it, whilst the day of grace lasts, hearken to his gracious voice, and come to him by faith and a sincere repentance, being persuaded, that those who thus come to him he will in no wise cast out. Let us set ourselves without delay to forsake our evil ways, and cast away from us our darling iniquities, and use our utmost endeavors, through the assistance of divine grace, to get a work of real sanctification begun and carried on in our souls. Renouncing all other confidence, let us give up ourselves wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord our righteousness and strength, in a hearty consent to the gracious terms of the new covenant, being persuaded of his sufficiency as a Savior, and that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day. And through him let us yield up ourselves to God our heavenly Father, as supreme and rightful Lord and chief good, whom we humbly resolve by his grace to obey, and in whom alone we can be completely and for ever happy. And having the foundation thus rightly laid by a true conversion of soul, and an unreserved dedication of ourselves to God through the Redeemer, let it be our great care to keep our souls in a constant actual readiness for Christ's second coming, by a careful improvement of our talents, and a diligent performance of the duties which God requireth of us. Let us be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God; and especially let us abound, as far as we have ability and opportunity, in acts of charity and mercy, that we may lay up a good foundation for the time to come, and may lay hold of eternal life. To them that now go on in a patient continuance in well doing, that day which shall fill the ungodly with amazement and terror, will be matter of unspeakable joy. The day of their complete redemption is then come. The dead in Christ shall rise first; their dust, which perhaps seemed to be scattered abroad and lost, shall be reunited at his commanding word, and be formed into a beautiful and glorious frame, shining with a celestial radiancy and splendor. And those saints, that shall then be found alive upon the earth, shall be changed as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without seeing death, and shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: And after having been solemnly acquitted and applauded by the great, the universal Judge, they shall all be thenceforth for ever with the Lord in the regions of unchangeable bliss and glory, happy in the vision and enjoyment of God and the Redeemer unto all eternity.

TRUE REPENTANCE.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.—Ezekiel xviii:26.

We hear a great deal about repentance, and how necessary it is for a man to repent of his sins; for unless a man repent, he cannot be forgiven. But do we all of us really know what repentance means?

I sometimes fear not. I sometimes fear, that though this text stands at the opening of the church service, and though people hear it as often as any text in the whole Bible, yet they have not really learnt the lesson which God sends them by it.

What, then, does repentance mean?

"Being sorry for what we have done wrong," say some.

But is that all? I suppose there are few wicked things done upon earth, for which the doers of them are not sorry, sooner or later. A man does a wrong thing, and his conscience pricks him, and makes him uneasy, and he says in his heart, "I wish after all I had left that alone." But the next time he is tempted to do the same thing, he does it, and is ashamed of himself afterwards again: but that is not repentance. I suppose that there have been few murders committed in the world, after which sooner or later the murderer did not say in his heart—"Ah, that that man were alive and well again!" But that is not repentance.

For aught I can tell, the very devil is sorry for his sin;—discontented, angry with himself, ashamed of himself for being a devil. He may be so to all eternity, and yet never repent. For the dark uneasy feeling which comes over every man sooner or later, after doing wrong, is not repentance; it is remorse; the most horrible and miserable of all feelings, when it comes upon a man in its full strength; the feeling of hating oneself, being at war with oneself, and with all the world, and with God who made it.

But that will save no man's soul alive. Repentance will save any and every soul alive, then and there; but remorse will not. Remorse may only kill him. Kill his body, by making him, as many a poor creature has done, put an end to himself in sheer despair; and kill his soul at least, by making him say in his heart, "Well, if bad I am, bad I must be. I hate myself, and God hates me also. All I can do is, to forget my unhappiness if I can, in business, in pleasure, in drink, and drive remorse out of my head; and often a man succeeds in so doing. The first time he does a wrong thing, he feels sorry and ashamed after it. Then he takes courage after a while, and does it again; and feels less sorrow and shame; and so again and again, till the sin becomes easier and easier to him, and his conscience grows more and more dull; till at last, perhaps, the feeling of its being wrong quite dies within—and that is the death of his soul.

But of true repentance, it is written, that he who repents shall have his soul *alive*. And how?

The word for repentance in Scripture means simply a change of mind. To change one's mind is, in Scripture words, to repent.

Now, if a man changes his mind, he changes his conduct also. If you set out to go to a place and change your mind, then you do not go there. If as you go on, you begin to have doubts about its being right to go, or to be sorry that you are going, and still walk on in the same road, however slowly or unwillingly, that is not changing your mind about going. If you do change your mind, you will change your steps. You will turn back, or turn off, and go some other road.

This may seem too simple to talk of. But if it be, why do not people act upon it? If a man finds that in his way through life he is on the wrong road, the road which leads to shame, and sorrow, and death and hell, why will he confess that he is on the wrong road, and say that he is very sorry (as perhaps he really may be) that he is going wrong, and yet go on, and persevere on the wrong path? At least, as long as he keeps on the road which leads to ruin, he has not changed his mind, or repented at all. He may find the road unpleasant, full of thorns, and briars, and pit-falls; for believe me, however broad the road is which leads to destruction, it is only the *gate* of it which is easy and comfortable; it soon gets darker and rougher, that road of sin; and the further you walk along it, the uglier and more wretched a road it is: but all the misery which it gives to a man is only useless remorse, unless he fairly repents, and turns out of that road into the path which leads to life.

Now the one great business of foolish man in all times has been to save his soul (as he calls it) without doing right; to go to heaven (as he calls it) without walking the road which leads to heaven. It is a folly and a dream. For no man can get to heaven, unless he be heavenly; and being heavenly is simply being good, and neither more nor less. And sin is death, and no man can save his soul alive, while it is dead in sin. Still men have been trying to do it in all ages and countries; and as soon as one plan has failed, they have tried some new one; and have invented some false repentance which was to serve instead of the true one. The old Jews seem to have thought that the repentance which God required was burnt-offerings and sacrifices; that if they could only offer bullocks and goats enough on God's altar, he would forgive them their sins. But David, and Isaiah after him, and Ezekiel after him, found out that *that* was but a dream; that that sort of repentance would save no man's soul; that God did not require burnt-offerings and sacrifice for sin; but simply that a man should do right and not wrong. "When ye come before me," saith the Lord, "who has required this at your hands, to tread my courts?" They were to bring no more vain offerings: but to put away the evil of their doings; to cease to do evil, to learn to do well; to seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and then and then only, though their sins were as scarlet, they should be white as snow. For God would take them for what they were—as good, if they were good; as bad, if they were bad. And this agrees exactly with the text. When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

The Papists again, thought that the repentance which God required, was for a man to punish himself bitterly for his sins; to starve and torture himself, to give up all that makes life pleasant, and so to atone. And good and pious men and women, with a real hatred and horror of sin, tried this; but they found that making themselves miserable took away their sins no more than burnt-offerings and sacrifices would do it. Their consciences were not relieved; they gained no feeling of comfort, no assurance of God's love. Then they said, "I have not punished myself enough. I have not made myself miserable enough. I will try whether more torture and misery

will not wipe out my sins." And so they tried again, and failed again, and then tried harder still, till many a noble man and woman in old times killed themselves piecemeal by slow torments, in trying to atone for their sins, and wash out in their own blood what was already washed out in the blood of Jesus Christ. But on the whole, that was found to be a failure. And now, the great mass of the Papists have fallen back on the wretched notion that repentance merely means confessing their sins to a priest, and receiving absolution from him, and doing some little penance too childish to speak of here.

But is there no false repentance among us English, too, my friends? No paltry substitute for the only true repentance which God will accept, which is, turning round and doing right? How many there are, who feel—"I am very wrong. I am very sinful. I am on the road to hell. I am quarrelling and losing my temper, and using bad language.—Or—I am cheating my neighbor. Or—I am living in adultery and drunkenness: I must repent before it is too late." But what do they mean by repenting? Come as often as they can to church or chapel, and reading all the religious books which they can get hold of: till they come, from often reading and hearing about the Gospel promises, to some confused notion that their sins are washed away in Christ's blood; or perhaps, on the strength of some violent feelings, believe that they are converted all on a sudden, and clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and renewed by God's Spirit, and that now they belong to the number of believers, and are among God's elect.

Now, my dear friends, I complain of no one going to hear all the good they can; I complain of no one reading all the religious books they can; but I think—and more, I know—that hearing sermons and reading tracts may be, and is often, turned into a complete snare of the devil by people who do not wish to give up their sins and do right, but only want to be comfortable in their sins.

Hear sermons if you will; read good books if you will: but bear in mind, that you know already quite enough to lead you to *repentance*. You need neither book nor sermon to teach you those ten commandments which hang here over the communion table; all that books and tracts and sermons can do is to teach you how to *keep* those commandments in spirit and in truth; but I am sure I have seen people read books, and run about to sermons, in order to enable them to forget those ten commandments; in order to find excuses for not keeping them; and to find doctrines which tell them, that because Christ has done all, they need do nothing;—only *feel* a little thankfulness, and a little sorrow for sin, and a little liking to hear about religion:—and call that repentance, and conversion, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Now, my dear friends, let me ask you as reasonable beings, do you think that hearing me or any man preach, can save your souls alive? Do you think that sitting over a book for an hour, a day, or all day long, will save your souls alive? Do you think that your sins are washed away in Christ's blood, when they are there still, and you are committing them? Would they be here, and you doing them, if they were put away? Do you think that your sins can be put away out of God's sight, if they are not even put out of your own sight? If you are doing wrong, do you think that God will treat you as if you were doing right? Cannot God see in you what you see in yourselves? Do you think a man can be clothed in Christ's righteousness at the very same time that he is clothed in his own unrighteousness? Can he be good and bad at once? Do you think a man can be converted—that is, turned round—when he is going on his old road the whole week? Do you think that a man has repented—that is, changed his mind—when he is in just the same mind as ever as to how he shall behave to his family, his customers, and everybody with whom he has to do? Do you think that a man is renewed by God's Spirit, when

except for a few religious phrases, and a little more outside respectability, he is just the old man, the same character at heart he ever was? Do you think that there is any use in a man's belonging to the number of believers, if he does not do what he believes; or any use in thinking that God has elected and chosen him, when he chooses not to do what God has chosen that every man must do, or die?

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. What a man sows, that shall he reap. Let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as Christ is righteous, and no one else.

He who tries to do as Christ did, and he only, has Christ's righteousness imputed to him, because he is trying to do what Christ did, that which is lawful and right. He who does righteousness, and he only, has truly repented, changed his mind about what he should do, and turned away from his wickedness which he has committed and is now doing that which is lawful and right. He who does righteousness, and he only, shall save his soul alive: not by feeling this thing, or believing about that thing, but by doing that which is lawful and right.

We must face it, my dear friends. We cannot deceive God; and God will certainly not deceive himself. He sees us as we are, and takes us for what we are. What is right in us, he accepts for the salvation of Jesus Christ, in whom we are created unto good works. What is wrong in us, he will assuredly punish, and give us the exact reward of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Every work of ours shall come into judgment, unless it be repented of, and put away by the only true repentance—not doing the thing any more.

God, I say, will judge righteous judgment, and take us as we are.

For the sake of Jesus the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, there is full, free, and perfect forgiveness for every sin, when we give it up. As soon as man turns round, and, instead of doing wrong, tries to do right, he need be under no manner of fear or terror any more. He is taken back into his Father's house as freely and graciously as the prodigal son in the parable was. Whatsoever dark score there was against him in God's books is wiped out there and then, and he starts clear, a new man, with a fresh chance of life. And whosoever tells him that the score is not wiped out, lies, and contradicts flatly God's holy word. But as long as a man does *not* give up his sins, the dark score *does* stand against him in God's books; and no praying, or reading, or devoutness of any kind will wipe it out; and as long as he sins, he is still in his sins, and his sins will be his ruin. Whosoever tells him that they are wiped out, he too lies, and contradicts flatly God's holy word.

For God is just, and true; and therefore God takes us for what we are, and will do so to all eternity; and you will find it so, my dearest friends. In spite of all doctrines which men have invented, and then pretended to find in the Bible, to drug men's consciences, and confuse God's clear light in their hearts, you will find, now and for ever, that if you do right you will be happy even in the midst of sorrow; if you do wrong you will be miserable even in the midst of pleasure. Oh believe this, my dear friends, and do not rashly count on some sudden magical change happening to you as soon as you die to make you fit for heaven. There is not one word in the Bible which gives us reason to suppose that we shall not be in the next world the same persons which we have made ourselves in this world. If we are unjust here, we shall, for aught we know, or can know, try to be unjust there; if we be filthy here, we shall be so there; if we be proud here, we shall be so there; if we be selfish here, we shall be so there. What we sow here, we shall reap there. And it is good for us to know this, and face this. Anything is good for us, however unpleasant it may be, which drives us from the only real misery, which is sin and selfishness, to the only true happiness, which is the everlasting life of Christ; a pure, loving, just, generous, useful life of goodness, which is the righteousness of

Christ, and the glory of Christ, and which will be our righteousness and our glory also for ever: but only if we live it; only if we be useful as Christ was, generous as Christ was, just as Christ was, gentle as Christ was, pure as Christ was, loving as Christ was, and so put on Christ, not in name and in word, but in spirit and in truth, that having worn Christ's likeness in this world, we may share his victory over all evil in the life to come.

COMPASSION FOR THE CROWD.

F. B. MEYER.

Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude. (My heart yearns over this mass of people.—DR. WEYMOUTH). Matthew xv: 32.

This feeding of the four thousand men is, of course, quite distinct from the other feeding, which had taken place previously, of the five thousand. There are many points of dissimilarity between these two banquets. We will not stay, however, to characterize them; but simply notice that each of the great epochs of our Savior's ministry closed with a banquet.

In Matthew 14, he closed his ministry in Galilee, where his home had been, by feeding the people from the five barley loaves and two small fishes, of which all of them partook. He closed his ministry amongst the heathen of Decapolis (which began with that wonderful story of the Canaanitish woman, who extorted deliverance for her child from hands that seemed unwilling to bless), by giving this banquet to the Gentiles, of which four thousand men, besides women and children, partook. The last six months of his ministry closed with another banquet of bread and wine given to his own inner circle, preparatory to his giving his flesh and blood for mankind. The first to the Galileans, the second to the heathen, the third to his own inner circle before he died.

These two feasts following so quickly one on the other, accentuated the lesson and thought which he desired to teach, that his disciples were to stand between him and the great world. When a man speaks to you for the first time, you are not always aware that he addresses you, but when he accosts you a second time, you give heed. It was not sufficient for Christ to work one miracle, because the disciples might not have heeded. He wished to teach them that they were to stand between him and the vast crowds of hungry men, and that they were to distribute the bread received from his hands. This is the position that the church occupies, between Jesus Christ and the vast mass of dying men. It seems as though the very pity of Jesus, the infinite compassion of his divine heart, broken today as ever, will be futile unless his disciples are called to his bosom and infused with his own feelings, that they may go forth from his very heart to do for men what he cannot do. His hands seem tied by some great restraint, and the church is the only medium through which the love of God can directly touch and save men. If we will not come to his heart to be infused with his compassion, if we will not receive the loaves broken

by his tender touch, then the crowds will go unhelped and unhealed, or he must call unto his assistance some others than ourselves.

CHRIST AND THE FATHER.

"He went up into a mountain, and sat." He waited in meditation and rest, in the divine communion which prepared him for three successive days to pour out heavenly virtue. He had always known that he must die and be lifted up; and the near approach of his death began to occupy him. He was nearing the mountain of transfiguration, on which he would definitely turn his back on the glory, and his face towards Calvary, and it was beginning to exert a powerful influence upon his soul.

He recognized that he had come down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father that sent him (John 6: 38). As man, he was conscious of the presence of his own will, but he was entirely subordinated to the overmastering movement of his Father's will, and desired nothing less than, as that will was done in heaven, so it should be wrought out through him on earth, even though it meant the cross and shame.

He realized that the Father had sealed him with the Holy Spirit (John 6: 27). Just as of old the victims that were to be offered for sacrifice in the temple passed under the careful scrutiny of the priest, and then were sealed as fit for offering on account of the sins of the people, so had he been searched and shown to be blameless and harmless, without spot or stain.

He knew that it was necessary for him to be broken, as the bread which was crumbling in his hand, that his flesh was to be given for the life of the world, and that men would be required to eat of that flesh and drink of that blood. (John 6:53).

But amid all these conflicting thoughts, he was sustained by his absorbing passion for men. God's love is for the world, and it is they who enter closest into fellowship with him for men, who are most willing to face obloquy, shame, and scorn, the spear and the thorn crown. The fountains of pity rise in the hills of communion with the eternal Father

Think of all those who have been most eager for the salvation of others, of Henry Martyn and James Gilmour, of David Brainerd and W. C. Burns, of D. L. Moody and Bishop Patteson—each of them has left an enduring record as a man of prayer, who walked with God, and to whom the yearning pity of God was communicated.

If the church would share in the compassion of Christ for the multitude, she must be willing to obey his call, to ascend into the mountain where Jesus summons his own into still more intimate fellowship, as he says: "I have compassion on the multitude."

CHRIST AND THE CROWDS.

There was an infinite attractiveness about Christ. There was no need to spend money on advertising the place where he was to be found. The crowds found him out, as bees discover flowers, and children detect the one person in the room who will give them welcome. Our incompleteness will be naturally attracted to him who can alone complete us. Disease will always discover health; thirst, the fountain; hunger, food.

Our Lord kept his doors open day and night. When, therefore, the great crowds came to him, bringing with them so many lame, maimed, blind, dumb, and others

that it took three days before they were all healed, they found an open welcome. He left his heavenly reveries, welcomed them as a host, and provided a rare banquet on the mountain grass. The more grievous their physical ailments, the readier his welcome, the more tender his pity.

What a marvelous contrast there is between Christ and Ahasuerus, of whom it is recorded that no man might come into the king's palace who had sackcloth on him (Esther 4:2). That is the way with the world's magnates. If there is moaning on the sea bar which tells of tempests sweeping the ocean, they hang heavier curtains over their windows to keep out the sound; if there is some unusual distress filling the newspapers with stories of want and woe, they request that these passages may be blotted out. All that is distasteful must be covered with whitewash, the roads must be gravelled, the air filled with fragrant perfume, and kept radiant with adulation and flattery. The maimed, halt, sick, and blind are conscious that they can expect little help when their sackcloth is irksome to behold.

We are all tempted to go into our gardens, walk quietly among the flowers, sit in grottos sheltered from the heat, listening to the music of the fountains, or lie full stretched on the grass, gazing into the infinite blue above, and say, "What a beautiful world!" But we refuse to look beyond the high walls, or heed the cry of little children being done to moral death, of boys and girls who are being sold into sin, and of the corruption in which the world lies. It may be well that we have the power of evading these sights and sounds, else human life would be insupportable; but Jesus Christ did not shrink from what must have cost him soul-travail, when he said: "I have compassion on the crowds."

The compassion of Christ was so infinitely attractive to people because he never dealt with them in a mass, but always with distinct individuals. Nothing hurts our philanthropy so much as the habit of classing men together under certain great divisions, and dealing with all members of a class on the same principle. In this way our finer feelings become deadened. We look at the forest; Christ knows every tree, nay, each branch and twig. We view the crowds as Xerxes did from the eminence of his throne; Christ is familiar with the bitter story of each human life, its tragedy and comedy, its hope and fear, its temptations and burdens, downsittings and uprisings.

We read in the newspapers that eight or ten thousand men have fallen in a single battle, but Christ knows how each man fell, the havoc the news brought into the home circle, and the bitter tears for one whose step would never be heard returning along the garden path. The woman that was a sinner, Nicodemus, Zacchæus, were all distinct subjects of his thought.

The fountains of compassion would begin to rise in each heart, if we would begin to individualize the need of men, thinking not of the lame, but of the one lame man; not of the blind, but of one sunless face; not of the dumb, but of the one man whose tongue was locked; not of the flock, but of the one sheep which has wandered from the fold, and is in danger. Remember that the one lost sheep attracted the Shepherd, the one lost money-piece incited the woman's search, the one lost child returning, filled the father's home with mirth.

CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.

"He called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion." Then he sent them to see how many loaves they had. He is always bringing us face to face with our inadequate supplies. He cannot do without our contribution. He will not work a needless miracle; in some marvelous way he is dependent upon us for our co-operation. He must have our hands to fill them with fish, our water to turn into

wine, our fishing tackle to catch the fish in whose mouth the money for the taxes will be found.

It would be as easy, apparently, for him to feed the four thousand by turning stones into food, or by the direct creation of bread without any previous provision. But no, this will not do, he must have such loaves as we have. Small and poor though they be, they are a necessary link in the chain of his Providence. But we must not be allowed to think ourselves necessary for the execution of his great plans, lest we become inflated with our own importance. He uses us lest we become dispirited. He sends us to see how many loaves we have, that we may not become proud. Only seven loaves and a few small fishes! What are they in the presence of this great need?

Let us look at the crowds, until we are filled with a deep compassion for them; then let us look at our slender supplies, till we are driven to him who alone can make them sufficient. Let us lay ourselves at his feet, confessing that he must touch us with that wonderful hand of his, or it is useless to think of meeting the clamant need of the perishing multitudes.

"HE GAVE TO THE DISCIPLES."

We may be sure that the Master will never leave us to face the multitudes by ourselves. We have been brought in contact with them because of our association with him, and he will supply us with a sufficiency for all their need, if only we will abide in him, and draw on him as we require.

Our mistake is that we so often endeavor to supply bread of our own making. By hard study, by severe mental discipline, by using the thoughts of others, we seek to minister to the souls committed to our charge; and we only pass muster with them because they are so drugged with the sedatives of pleasure, money-making, and self-indulgence, as to be dead to their true needs. But let their souls awake, and they would sweep past us, with the awful cry, which has so often betokened a revolution: "Bread! bread! Give us bread!"

Our Lord is not only the giver of the bread, but he is Bread, the Living Bread which came down from heaven. He brake the bread, as on the cross his heart was broken, and it is this aspect of Jesus that men need. When we are conscious of acceptance with God, and desire power for all the calls and opportunities of life, we must deal with the Risen Living One.

But when we are conscious of sin, needing forgiveness and peace, when the bread-hunger gnaws within, when we are broken by disappointment and failure, then we need him of the crown and thorns, of the nail and spear. We cannot be grafted into Christ, save in his wounds. "This," says he, "is my body which is given (broken) for you."

"AND THE DISCIPLES TO THE MULTITUDE."

Only thus can we keep full-handed. Had the disciples ceased to give, the bread would have ceased to multiply, and would have dwindled in their hands.

One condition of increase was diffusion, of multiplication, division. Is not this the reason why some, who are ever hearing the word, fail to make increase in the life of God? Nothing is given us for ourselves only, but all to impart to others. Only when these are all supplied may we gather up the fragments which are left over, and consider ourselves.

Every new glimpse of truth is given that you may hand it on to others, not only in the first row, but in the rear also, that all may be well satisfied.

"JESUS HIMSELF."

ANDREW MURRAY.

Luke xxiv: 31.

The words, from which I want to give you a message, you will find in the Gospel according to St. Luke, the 24th chapter and the 31st verse: "And their eyes were opened and they knew him."

Some years ago I preached a sermon, taking as my text the words "Jesus himself," and as I went home I said to those who were walking with me, "How possible it is to have Jesus himself with us and never to know it, and how possible to preach of and to listen to all the truth about Jesus himself and yet not to know him." I cannot say what a deep impression was made upon me as I thought over it.

Now these disciples had spent a most blessed time with Jesus, but if they had gone away before he revealed himself that evening, they would never have been sure that it was Jesus, for their eyes were holden that they should not know him. That is, alas, the condition of a great multitude in the Church of Christ. They know that Christ has risen from the dead. They believe, and they very often have blessed experiences that come from the risen Christ. Very often in a time of convention, or in a time of silent Bible reading, or in a time of the visitation of God's grace, their hearts burn, and yet it can be said of a people whose hearts are burning within them, that they did not know it was Jesus himself.

And now if you ask me what is to be the great blessing of a convention, my answer is this: not only should we think about Jesus himself and speak about him and believe in him, but we should come to the point that the disciples in the text arrived at, *"and they knew him."* Everything is to be found in that.

If I read that story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, I get from it four stages in the Christian life. Just think! How did they begin the morning that day? With hearts sad and troubled, because they thought Jesus was dead. They did not know that he was alive, and that is the state of very many Christians. They look to the cross, and they struggle to trust Christ, but they have never yet learned the blessedness of believing that there is a living Christ to do everything for them. Oh! the word of the angel to the women! "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" What is the difference betwen a dead Christ, whom the women went to anoint, and a living Christ? A dead Christ I must do everything for; a living Christ does everything for me.

The disciples began the morning with a sad heart. I fancy very possibly they spent a sleepless night. Oh! the terrible disappointment! They had hoped that Christ would be the deliverer of Israel, and they had seen him die an accursed death. On the morning of that first day of the week, they rose with sad hearts—the bitter sadness cannot be expressed. That is just the life of many Christians. They try to believe in Jesus and to trust him, and to hope in him, but there is no joy. Why? Because they do not know that there is a living Christ to reveal himself.

Then there is the second stage. What is that? The stage of which Christ speaks:

"Slow of heart to believe." They had the message from the women. They told the stranger who walked with them: "Certain women have astonished us, telling us they have seen an angel, who says he is alive." And Christ replied to them: "Oh! fools, and slow of heart to believe." Yes! there are Christians to-day who have heard and who know that they must not only believe in a crucified Christ, but in a living Christ, and they try to grasp it and take it in, but it does not bring them a blessing, and why? Because they want to feel it and not to believe it. They want to work for it, and with efforts get hold of it, instead of just quietly sinking down and believing "Christ, the living Jesus, he will do everything for us." That is the second stage. The first stage is that of ignorance, the second stage is that of unbelief—the doubting heart that cannot take in the wonderful truth that Jesus lives.

Then comes the third stage—

THE BURNING HEART.

Jesus came to the two disciples, and after he had reproved them and said: "Oh! fools, and slow of heart to believe," he began to open the Scriptures to them, and to tell them of all the wonderful things the prophets had taught. Then their eyes were opened, and they began to understand the Scriptures. They saw that it was true that it was prophesied that Christ must rise. As he talked there came out from him—the living risen One—a mighty influence, and it rested upon them, and they began to feel their hearts burn within them with joy and gladness.

You still say perhaps: "That is the blessing that I am longing for," but God forbid you should stop there. You may get into that third stage—the burning heart —and yet something is still wanting—the revelation of Christ. The disciples had had a blessed experience of his divine powers, but he had not revealed himself, and oh! how often it is that at conventions and in churches, and in meetings and in blessed fellowship with God's saints, our hearts burn within us. These are precious experiences of the working of God's grace and spirit, and yet there is something wanting, and what is that? Jesus himself has been working upon us, and the power of his risen life has touched us, but we cannot say "I have met him. He has made himself known to me." Oh, the difference between a burning heart, which becomes cold after a time, which comes by fits and starts, and the blessed revelation of Jesus himself as my Savior, taking charge of me and blessing me and keeping me every day! This is the stage of the satisfied heart.

Oh my friends! it is what I ask for you, and it is what I am sure you ask for yourselves. I ask it for myself. Lord Jesus! may we know thee in thy divine glory as the risen one, our Jesus, our beloved and our mighty one. Oh! if there are any sad ones who cannot take this in, and who say "I have never known the joy of religion yet"—listen, we want to tell you how you can. We cannot emphasize this point too strongly, that just as that little child lives day by day in the arms of its mother and grows up year by year under a mother's eye, it is a possibility that you can live every day and hour of your life in fellowship with the holy Jesus.

HE WILL DO IT FOR YOU.

Oh come to-day, and let your sad heart begin to hope! Will he reveal himself? He did it to the disciples and he will do it to us. Perhaps there are some of you who have got beyond the sad heart and who yet feel "I have not got what I want." If you thrown open your heart and give up everything but just believing and allowing him to do what he wants, it will come. God be praised! it will come.

JESUS WILL REVEAL HIMSELF.

Perhaps you have arrived at the stage of the burning heart and can tell of many blessed experiences, but somehow there is a worm at the root. The experiences do not last, and the heart is so changeable. Oh come! my beloved. Follow Christ. Let us all come and say, "Jesus, reveal thyself that we may know thee thyself. We ask not only to drink of the living water, we want the fountain. We ask not only to bathe ourselves in the light, we want the sun of righteousness within our hearts. We ask not only to know thee, who has touched us and warmed our hearts and blessed us, but we want to know that we have the unchangeable Jesus dwelling within our hearts and abiding with us for evermore."

Now comes the question which I really wanted to put before you. What are the conditions under which our blessed Lord reveals himself? Or put it this way—to whom is it that Jesus will reveal himself? Let us ask that, and we have just to take these disciples and we get the answer. What is the answer? First of all I think I find here that Christ revealed himself to those disciples

WHO HAD GIVEN UP EVERYTHING FOR HIM.

He had said to them: "Forsake all and follow me," and they had done it. With all their feebleness and all their unfaithfulness they followed Christ to the end. He said to them: "Ye have continued with me in my temptations and I appoint you a kingdom, as I have received a kingdom from my Father." They were not perfect men, but they would have died for him. They loved him, they obeyed him, they followed him. They had left all, and for three years they had been following hard after Christ. You ask me: "Tell me what Christ wants of me, if I am to have his wonderful presence. Tell me what is the character of the man to whom Christ will reveal himself in this highest and fullest way?" I answer: "It is the one who is ready to forsake all and to follow him." If Christ is to give himself wholly to me, he must know that he has me wholly for himself, and I trust God will give grace to each one of us to come to the point of surrender, not only of all evil, but of many lawful things, and even, if necessary, of life itself, by which we may be led to understand what the demand is that Jesus makes upon us.

You know the motto of the South Africa General Mission is, "God first." In one sense that is a beautiful motto, and yet I am not always satisfied with it, because it is a motto that is often misunderstood. God first may mean "I" second, something else third, and something else fourth. God is thus first in order, but still God becomes one of a series of powers, and that is not the place God wants. The meaning of the word, "God first" is really "God all; God everything;" and that is what Christ wants. To be willing to give up everything, to submit to Christ to teach him what to say and what to do, is the first mark of the man to whom Christ will come. Who is ready to say: "Jesus! I do give up everything; I have given up everything; reveal thyself."

Oh, friends, do not hesitate. Speak it out in your hearts, and let this be a time in which many a new sacrifice will be laid at the feet of the blessed Lamb of God.

There is a second thought. There is first the idea of having forsaken all to follow him; of having given up everything in obedience to him, and living just a life of simple love and obedience. But there is a second thing needed in the man who is to have this full revelation of Christ. He must be convicted of his unbelief. "Oh! fools, and slow of heart to believe what the prophets have said." If we could

have a sight of the amount of unbelief in the hearts of God's children, barring the door and closing the heart against Christ, how we should stand astonished and ashamed. When there is not unbelief, where there is faith, Christ cannot help coming in. He cannot help where there is a living faith, a full faith. The heart is opened, the heart is prepared; and as naturally as water runs into a hollow place, so naturally Christ must come into a heart that is full of faith. What is the hindrance with some earnest souls, who say: "I have given myself up to the Lord Jesus. I have done it often, and by his grace I am doing it every day, and God knows how earnestly and really I am doing it, and I have the sanction of God upon it, I know God has blessed me?" They have not been convicted of their unbelief. "Oh! fools, and slow of heart to believe." Do you know what Christ said about a man calling his brother a fool? Yet here the loving Son of God could find no other word to speak to his beloved disciples: "Oh! fools, and slow of heart to believe." You want the Lord Jesus to give you this full revelation of himself, my friend? Are you willing to acknowledge that you are a fool for never having believed in him? "Lord Jesus, it is my own fault. There thou art, longing to have possession of me. There thou hast been with thy faithful promises waiting to reveal thyself."

Did you ever hear of a man loving another and not longing to reveal himself? Christ longs to reveal himself, but he can't on account of our unbelief. May God convict every one of us of our unbelief, that we may get utterly ashamed and broken down and cry, "Oh, my God, what is this, this heart of unbelief actually throwing a barrier across the door that Christ cannot step in, blinding my eyes that I cannot see Jesus though he is so near? Here he has been for ten or twenty years, from time to time giving me the burning heart, enjoying the experience of a little of his love and grace, and yet I have not had the revelation of him, taking possession of my heart and dwelling with me in unbroken continuity." Oh! friends, may God convict us of unbelief. Do let us believe, because all things are possible to him that believes. That is God's word, and this blessing, receiving the revelation of Jesus, can come only to those who learn to believe and to trust him.

There is another mark of those to whom this special revelation of Christ will come, and that is, they do not rest until they obtain it. You know the story. Their hearts were burning as they drew nigh to the place they were going to, and Christ made as if he were going further. He put them to the test, and if they had allowed him quietly to go on, if they had been content with the experience of the burning heart, they would have lost something infinitely better. But they were not content with it. They were not content to go home to the disciples that night and say, "Oh, what a blessed afternoon we have had! What wonderful teaching we have had!" No! The burning heart and the blessed experience just made them say, "Lord, abide with us," and they compelled him to come in. They constrained him to come in.

It always reminds me of the story of Jacob, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." That is the spirit that prepares us for the revelation of Jesus. Has this been the spirit in which we have looked upon the wonderful blessing that we have sometimes heard of? "Oh! my Lord Jesus, though I do not understand it, though I cannot grasp it, though my struggles avail nothing, I am not going to let thee go. If it is possible for a sinner on earth to have Jesus every day, every hour, and every moment in resurrection power dwelling in his heart, shining within him, filling him with love and joy, if that is possible, I want it."

IS THAT YOUR LANGUAGE?

Oh! come then and say: "Lord Jesus, I cannot let thee go except thou bless me." The question is asked so often: "What is the cause of the feeble life of so many Christians?" What is really the matter? What is actually the want?

How little the church responds to Christ's call! how little the church is what Christ would have her to be. The question is asked repeatedly: "What is the cause of all the trouble?" Various answers are given, but, as I listen to the different answers, my heart feels there is one answer, or rather there is one answer which includes all the other answers, and that is, each believer wants the personal, full revelation of a personal Christ as an indwelling Lord, as a satisfying portion. When the Lord Jesus was here upon earth, what was it that distinguished his disciples from other people? He took them away from their fish-nets, and from their homes, and he gathered them about himself, and they knew him. He was their master, and guarded them, and they followed him. And what is to make a difference between Christ's disciples—not those who are just hoping to get to heaven, but Christ's whole-hearted disciples—what is to make a difference between them and other people? It is this, to be in fellowship with Jesus—every hour of the day; and just as Christ upon earth was able to keep those people with him for three years, day by day, so Christ is able in heaven now to do what he could not do when he was on earth—to keep in the closest fellowship with every believer throughout the whole world. Glory be to God! You know that text in Ephesians: "He that descended is the same also that ascended, that he might fill all things." Why was my Lord Jesus taken up to heaven away from the life of earth? Because the life of earth is a life confined to localities, but the life in heaven is a life in which there is no limit and no bound and no locality, and Christ was taken up to heaven, that, in the power of God, of the omnipresent God, he might be able to fill every individual here and be with every individual believer.

That is what my heart wants to realize by faith, that is a possibility, that is a promise, that is my birthright and I want to have it, and I want by the grace of God to say (oh! let everyone say): "Jesus, I will not rest until thou hast revealed thyself fully to my soul."

There are often very blessed experiences in the Christian life in what I call the third stage—the stage of the burning heart. Do you know what another great mark of that stage is? Delight in God's word. How did the disciples get their burning hearts? By that strange opening of the Scripture to them. He made it all look different—new, and they saw what they had never seen before. They could not help feeling how wonderful, how heavenly was that teaching. Oh! there are many Christians, who find the best time of the day is the time when they can get with their Bibles, and who love nothing so much as to get a new thought; and as a diamond digger rejoices when he has found a diamond, or a gold digger when he has found a nugget, they delight when they get from the Bible some new thought, and they feed upon it. Yet with all that interest in God's word and with all that stirring of the heart with joy, when they go into business or attend to their daily duties, there is still something wanting.

Friends, we must come away from all the manifold and multifarious blessings that Jesus can bestow from time to time to the blessed unity of that one—that Jesus makes himself known, Jesus himself is willing to make himself known. Oh! if I were to ask, "Is not this just what you and I want, and what many of us have been longing for?" I am sure you will answer me, "That is what I want." Think what the blessedness will be that comes from it. You often sing:—

Oh! the peace my Savior gives!
  Peace I never knew before,
And my way has brighter grown,
  Since I've learnt to trust him more.

But how can that peace be kept? It is the presence of Christ that brings the peace. When the storm was threatening to swallow up the disciples, it was the presence of Christ himself that gave the peace.

Oh! Christians, do you want peace and rest? You must have Jesus himself. You talk of purity, you talk of cleansing, you talk of deliverance from sin. Praise God, here is the deliverance and the cleansing, when the living Jesus comes and gives power. Then we have this resurrection of Christ, this heavenly Christ upon the throne, making himself known to us. Surely that will be the secret of purity and the secret of strength.

Where does the strength of so many come from? From the joy of a personal friendship with Jesus. Those disciples, if they had gone away with their burning hearts to the other disciples, could have told them wonderful things of a man who had explained to them the scriptures and the promises, but they could not have said, "We have seen Jesus." They might have said, "Jesus is alive. We are sure of that," but that would not have satisfied the others. But they could not go and say,

"WE HAVE SEEN HIMSELF.

He has revealed himself to us." We are all glad to work for Christ, but there is a complaint throughout the church of Christ, from the minister in the pulpit down to the feeblest worker, of lack of joy and lack of blessedness. Let us try and find out whether the secret may not be discovered—that the Lord Jesus comes and shows himself to us as our Master and speaks to us. When we have Jesus with us, and when we go every footstep with the thought that it is Jesus who wants us to go, it is Jesus who sends us and is helping us, then there will be brightness in our testimony, and it will help other believers and they will begin to understand: "I see why I have failed. I took the word, I took the blessing, and I took, as I thought, the life, but I was without the living Jesus."

And if you now ask, "How will this revelation come?" Brothers, sisters, that is the secret that no man may tell, *that* Jesus keeps to himself. It is

IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Christ, the risen one, entered into a new life. His resurrection life is entirely different from his life before his death. You know what we read: "They knew him." He revealed himself, and then he passed away. And was that vision of Christ worth so much? It was lost in a moment. It was worth heaven, eternity, everything. Why? Because henceforth Christ was no longer to be known after the flesh. Christ was henceforth in the power of the Spirit, which fills heaven; in the power of the Spirit, which is the power of the Godhead; in the power of the Spirit, which fills our hearts. Christ was henceforth to live in the life of heaven.

Thank God, Christ can by the power of the Holy Ghost reveal himself to each one of us, but it is a secret thing between Christ and yourself. Take this assurance, "Their eyes were opened and they knew him," and believe that it is written for you.

You say, "I have known the other three stages; the stage of the sad heart, mourning that I knew no living Christ; I have known the stage of the slow heart to believe, when I struggled with my unbelief; and I know the stage of the burning heart, when there are great times of joy and blessedness." You say that! Oh, come then, and know the fourth stage of

THE SATISFIED HEART,

of the heart made glad for eternity, of the heart that cannot keep its joy in, but goes away back to Jerusalem, and says, "It is true. Jesus has revealed himself. I know it. I feel it." How will this revelation come? Jesus will tell you.

Let each one enter into the holy presence and begin, if you have never yet sought it before, begin to plead: "Oh! Savior that I might have this blessedness every moment present with me—Jesus himself, my portion forever." Come, let us bow in humble prayer.

THE LOST SHEEP AND THE SEEKING SHEPHERD.

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

If a man hath an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?—Matt. xviii: 12.

We find this simple parable, or germ of a parable, in a somewhat more expanded form, as the first of the incomparable three in the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel. Perhaps our Lord repeated the parable more than once. It is an unveiling of his deepest heart, and therein a revelation of the very heart of God. It touches the deepest things in his relation to men, and sets forth thoughts of him, such as man never dared to dream. It does all this by the homeliest image and by an appeal to the simplest instincts. The most prosaic shepherd looks for lost sheep, and everybody has peculiar joy over lost things found. They may not be nearly so valuable as things that were not lost. The unstrayed may be many, and the strayed be but one. Still there is a keener joy in the recovery of the one than in the unbroken possession of the ninety and nine. That feeling in a man may be only selfishness, but homely as it is—when the loser is God, and the lost are men, it becomes the means of uttering and illustrating that truth concerning God which no religion but the cross has ever been bold enough to proclaim, that he cares most for the wanderers, and rejoices over the return of the one that went astray more than over the ninety and nine who never wandered.

There are some significant differences between this edition of the parable and the form which it assumes in the Gospel according to Luke. There it is spoken in vindication of Christ's consorting with publicans and sinners; here it is spoken in order to point the lesson of not despising the least and most insignificant of the sons of men. There the seeking shepherd is obviously Christ; here the seeking shepherd is rather the divine Father; as appears by the words of the next verse: "For it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." There the sheep is lost; here the sheep goes astray. There the shepherd seeks till he finds, here the shepherd, perhaps, fails to find; for our Lord says: "*If so be* that he finds it."

But I am not about to venture on all the thoughts which this parable suggests,

nor even to deal with the main lesson which it teaches. I wish merely to look at the two figures—the wanderer and the seeker.

I.—First, then, let us look at that figure of the one wanderer.

Of course I need scarcely remind you that in the immediate application of the parable in Luke's Gospel, the ninety and nine were the respectable people who thought the publicans and harlots altogether too dirty to touch, and regarded it as very doubtful conduct on the part of this young Rabbi from Nazareth to be mixed up with people whom nobody with a proper regard for whited sepulchres would have anything to do with. To them he answers, in effect—I am a shepherd. That is my vindication. Of course a shepherd goes after and cares for the lost sheep. He does not ask about its worth, or anything else. He simply follows the lost because it is lost. It may be a poor little creature after all, but it is lost, and that is enough. And so he vindicates himself to the ninety and nine: "You do not need me, you are found. I take you on your own estimation of yourselves, and tell you that my mission is to the wanderers."

I do not suppose, however, that any of us have need to be reminded that upon a closer and deeper examination of the facts of the case, every hoof of the ninety and nine belonged to a stray sheep too; and that *all* men are wanderers in the wider application of the parable. Remembering then this universal application, I would point out two or three things about the condition of these strayed sheep, which include the whole race. The ninety and nine may shadow for us a number of beings in unfallen worlds immensely greater than even the multitudes of wandering souls that have lived here through weary ages of sin and tears, but that does not concern us now.

The first thought I gather from the parable is that all men are Christ's sheep. That sounds a strange thing to say. What? All these men and women who having run away from him are plunged in sin, like sheep mired in a black bog, the scoundrels and the profligates, the scum and the outcasts of great cities like this; people with narrow foreheads, and blighted, blasted lives, the despair of our modern civilization, are they all his? And those great wide-lying heathen lands where men know nothing of his name and of his love, are they all his too? Let him answer, "Other sheep I have";—though they look like goats today—"which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice." All men are Christ's, because he has been the agent of divine creation, and the grand words of the hundredth Psalm are true about him. "It is he that hath made us, and we are his. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture." They are his, because his sacrifice has bought them for his. Erring, straying, lost, they still belong to the shepherd.

Notice next, the picture of the sheep as wandering. The word is, literally, "which *goeth* astray," not "which is gone astray." It pictures the process of wandering, not the result as accomplished. We see the sheep, poor, silly creature, not going anywhere in particular, only there is a sweet tuft of grass here, and it crops that; and here is a bit of ground where there is soft walking, and it goes there; and so, step by step, not meaning anything, not knowing where it is going, or that it *is* going anywhere; it goes, and goes, and goes, and at last it finds out that it is away from its beat on the hillside—for sheep keep to one bit of hillside generally, as any shepherd will tell you—and then it begins to bleat, and most helpless of creatures, fluttering and excited, rushes about amongst the thorns and brambles, or gets mired in some quag or other, and it will never find its way back of itself until somebody comes for it.

"So," says Christ to us, "there are a great many of you that do not mean to go wrong; you are not going anywhere in particular, you do not start on your course with any intentions either way, of doing either right or wrong, of keeping near God, or going away from him, but you simply go where the grass is sweetest, or the

walking easiest; and look at the end of it; where you have got to." You have got away from him.

Now, if you take that series of parables in Luke xv, and read the stories there, you will see three different sides given of the process by which a man's heart strays away from God. There is the sheep that wanders. That is partly conscious, and voluntary, but in a large measure, simply yielding to inclination and temptation. Then there is the coin that trundles away under some piece of furniture, and is lost—that is a picture of the manner in which a man, without volition, almost mechanically sometimes, slides into sins and disappears as it were, and gets covered over with the dust of evil. And then there is the worst of all, the lad that had full knowledge of what he was doing. "I am going into a far off country, I cannot stand this any longer—all restraint and no liberty, and no power of doing what I like with my own; and always obliged to obey and be dependent on my father for my pocket money! Give me what belongs to me, for good and all, and let me go!" That is the picture of the worst kind of wandering, when a man knows what he is about, and looks at the merciful restraint of the law of God, and says: "No! I had rather be far away; and my own master, and not always be 'cribbed, cabined and confined' with these limitations."

The straying of the half-conscious sheep may seem more innocent, but it carries the poor thing away from the shepherd as completely as if it had been wholly intelligent and voluntary. Let us learn the lesson. In a world like this, if a man does not know very clearly where he is going, he is sure to go wrong. If you do not exercise a distinct determination to do God's will, and to follow in his footsteps who has set us an example; and if your main purpose is to get succulent grass to eat and soft places to walk in, you are certain before long to wander tragically from all that is right and noble and pure. It is no excuse for you to say; "I never meant it"; "I did not intend any harm, I only followed my own inclinations." "More mischief is wrought"—to the man himself, as well as to other people—"from want of thought than is wrought by" an evil will. And the sheep has strayed as effectually, though, when it set out on its journey, it never thought of straying. Young men and women beginning life! remember and take this lesson.

But then there is another thing that I must touch for a moment. In the Revised Version you will find a very tiny alteration in the words of my text, which, yet, makes a large difference in the sense. The last clause of our text, as it stands in our Bible, is, "and seeketh that which is *gone* astray"; the Revised Version, more correctly, reads:—"and seeketh that which *is going* astray."

Now, look at the difference in these two renderings. In the former, the process is represented as finished, in the correct rendering it is represented as going on. And that is what I would press on you, the awful, solemn, necessarily progressive character of our wanderings from God. A man never gets to the end of the distance that separates between him and the Father, if his face is turned away from God. Every moment the separation is increasing. Two lines start from each other at the acutest angle and diverge further apart from each other the further they are produced, until at last the one may be away up by the side of God's throne, and the other away down in the deepest depths of hell. So accordingly my text carries with solemn pathos, in a syllable, the tremendous lesson: "The sheep is not gone, *going* astray." Ah! there are some of my hearers who are daily and hourly increasing the distance between themselves and their merciful Father.

Now the last thing here in this picture is the contrast between the description given of the wandering sheep in our text, and that in St. Luke. Here it is represented as wandering, there it is represented as lost. That is very beautiful and has a meaning often not noticed by hasty readers. Who is it that has lost it? We talk

about the lost soul and the lost man, as if it were the man that had lost *himself*, and that is true, and a dreadful truth it is! But that is not the truth that is taught in this parable, and meant by us to be gathered from it. Who is it that has lost it? He to whom it belonged.

That is to say, wherever a heart gets ensnared and entangled with the love of the treasures and pleasures of this life, and so departs in allegiance and confidence and friendship from the living God, there God the Father regards himself as the poorer by the loss of one of his children, by the loss of one of his sheep. He does not care to possess you by the hold of mere creation and supremacy and rule. He wants you to love him, and then he thinks he has you. And if you do not love him, he thinks he has lost you. There is something in the divine heart that goes out after his lost property. We touch here upon deep things that we cannot speak about intelligibly, only remember this, that what looks like self-regard in man is the purest love in God; and that there is nothing in the whole revelation which Christianity makes of the character of God more wonderful than this, that he judges that he has lost his child when his child has forgotten to love him.

II.—So much, then, for one of the great pictures in this text. I can spare but a sentence or two for the other—the picture of the seeker. I said that in the one form of the parable it was more distinctly the Father and in the other more distinctly the Son, who is represented as seeking the sheep. But these two do still coincide in substance, inasmuch as God's chief way of seeking us poor wandering sheep is through the work of his dear Son Jesus, and the coming of Christ is the Father's searching for his sheep in the "cloudy and dark day."

In these words of my text God leaves the ninety and nine and goes into the mountains where the wanderer is, and seeks him. And thus, couched in veiled form, is the great mystery of the divine love, the incarnation and sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. Here is the answer by anticipation to the sarcasm that is often leveled at evangelical Christianity:—"You must think a good deal of human nature, and must have a great arrogant notion of the inhabitants of this little speck that floats in the great sea of the heavens, if you suppose that with all these millions of orbs, the divine nature came down upon this little tiny molehill, and took your nature and died."

Yes! says Christ, not because man was so great, not because man was so valuable in comparison with the rest of creation—he was but one amongst ninety-nine unfallen and unsinful—but because he was so wretched, because he was so small, because he had gone so far away from God; *therefore*, the seeking love came after him, and would draw him to itself. That, I think, is answer enough.

And then, there is the difference between these two versions of the parable in respect to their representation of the end of the seeking. The one says "seeks until he finds." Oh, the patient, incredible inexhaustibleness of the divine love. God's long-suffering, if I may take such a metaphor, like a sleuth-hound will follow the object of its search through all its windings and doublings, until it comes up to it. So that great seeking Shepherd follows us through all the devious courses of our wayward wandering footsteps doubling back upon themselves until he finds us. Though the sheep may increase its distance the shepherd follows. The further away we get the more tender his appeal; the more we stop our ears the louder the voice with which he calls. You cannot wear out Jesus Christ, you cannot exhaust the resources of his bounteousness, of his tenderness. However we may have been going wrong, however far we may have been wandering, however vehemently we may be increasing, at every moment, our distance from him, he is coming after us, loving, long-suffering, and will not be put away.

Dear friend! would you only believe that a loving, living Person is really seeking

you, seeking you by my poor words now, seeking you by many a providence, seeking you by his Gospel, by his Spirit; and will never be satisfied till he has found you in your finding him and turning your soul to him!

But, I beseech you, do not forget the solemn lesson drawn from the other form of the parable which is given in my text:—*if so be that he find it.* There is a possibility of failure! What an awful power you have of burying yourself in the sepulchre as it were, of your own self-will, and hiding yourself in the darkness of your own unbelief! You can frustrate the seeking love of God. Some of you have done so—some of you have done so all your lives! Some of you, perhaps, at this moment are trying to do it, and consciously endeavoring to steel your hearts against some softening that may have been creeping over them whilst I have been speaking. Are you yielding to his seeking love, or wandering further and further from him? He has come to find you. Let him not seek in vain, but let the Good Shepherd draw you to himself, when, lifted on the cross, he giveth his life for the sheep. He will restore your soul and carry you back on his strong shoulder or in his bosom near his loving heart to the green pastures and the safe fold. There will be joy in his heart, more than over those who have never wandered; and there will be joy in the heart of the returning wanderer, such as they who had not strayed and learned the misery could never know, for, as the profound Jewish saying has it, "In the place where the penitents stand, the perfectly righteous cannot stand."

NOW, NOW—NOT BY-AND-BY.

A SERMON TO THE YOUNG.

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

And as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.—Acts xxiv:25.

Felix and his brother had been favourite slaves of the Emperor, and so had won great power at court. At the date of this incident he had been for some five or six years the procurator of the Roman province of Judea; and how he used his power the historian Tacitus tells us in one of his bitter sentences in which he says, "He wielded his kingly authority with the spirit of a slave, in all cruelty and lust."

He had tempted from her husband, Drusilla, a daughter of that Herod whose dreadful death is familiar to us all; and his court reeked with blood and debauchery. He is here face to face with Paul for the second time. On a former interview he had seen good reason to conclude that the Roman Empire was not in much danger from this one Jew whom his countrymen, with suspicious loyalty, were charging with sedition; and so he had allowed him a very large margin of liberty.

On this second occasion he had sent for him evidently not as a judge, but partly with a view to try to get a bribe out of him, and partly because he had some kind of languid interest, as most Romans then had, in Oriental thought,—some languid interest perhaps too in this strange man. Or he and Drusilla were possibly longing for a new

sensation, and not indisposed to give a moment's glance at Paul, with his singular ideas

So they called for the Apostle, and the guilty couple got a good deal more than they bargained for. Paul does not speak to them as a Greek philosopher, anxious to please high personages, might have done, but he goes straight at their sins. "He reasons of righteousness" with the unjust judge, "of temperance" with the self-indulgent, sinful pair, "of the judgment to come" with these two, who thought that they could do anything they liked with impunity. Christianity has sometimes to be exceedingly rude in reference to the sins of the upper classes.

As Paul goes on, a strange fear began to creep about the heart of Felix. It is the watershed of his life that he has come to, the crisis of his fate. Everything depends on the next five minutes. Will he yield? Will he resist? The tongue of the balance trembles and hesitates for a moment and then, but slowly, the wrong scale goes down. "Go thy way for this time."

Ah! If he had said: "Come and help me to get rid of this strange fear," how different all might have been! The metal was at the very point of melting. What shape would it take? It ran into the wrong mould, and, as far as we know, it was hardened there. "It might have been once, and he missed it, lost it forever." No sign marked out that moment from the common uneventful moments, though it saw the death of a soul.

Now, my dear young friends, I am not going to say anything more to you of this man and his character, but I wish to take this incident and its lessons and urge them on your hearts and consciences.

I. Let me say a word or two about the fact, of which this incident is an example, and of which I am afraid many of your lives would furnish other examples, that men lull awakened consciences to sleep and excuse delay in deciding for Christ by half-honest promises to attend to religion at some future time.

"Go thy way for this time" is what Felix is really anxious about. His one thought is to get rid of Paul and his disturbing message for the present. But he does not wish to shut the door altogether. He gives a sop to his conscience to stop its barking, and he probably deceives himself as to the gravity of his present decision by the lightly given, and well-guarded promise with its indefiniteness, "When I have a convenient season I will send for thee." The thing he really means is—Not now, at all events: the thing he hoodwinks himself with is, By-and-by. Now that is what I know some of you are doing; and my purpose and earnest prayer is to bring you tonight to the decision which by one vigorous act of your wills will settle the question for the future as to which God you are going to follow.

So, then, I have just one or two things to say about this first part of my subject. Let me remind you that however beautiful, however gracious, however tender, and full of love and mercy, and good tidings the message of God's love in Jesus Christ is, there is another side to it, a side which is meant to rouse men's consciences and to awaken men's fears.

You bring a man like the man in this story, Felix, or a very much better man than he—any of us that are here to-night—into contact with these three thoughts:—"Righteousness, temperance, judgment to come," and the effect of a direct appeal to moral convictions will always be more or less to awaken a sense of failure, insufficiency, defect, sin; and to create a certain creeping dread that if I set myself against the great law of God, that law of God will have a way of crushing me. The fear is well founded, and not only does the contemplation of God's *law* excite it. God's gospel comes to us, and just because it is a gospel, and is intended to lead you and me to love and trust Jesus Christ, and give our whole hearts and souls to him—just because it is the best "good news" that ever came into the world, it begins often (not always, perhaps,) by making a man feel what a sinful man he is, and how he has gone against

God's law, and how there hang over him, by the very necessities of the case and the constitution of the universe, consequences bitter and painful. Now, I believe that there are very few people who, like you, come occasionally into contact with the preaching of the truth, who have not had their moments when they felt—"Yes! it is all true—it is all true. I *am* bad, and I *have* broken God's law, and there is a dark look-out before me!" I believe that most of us know what that feeling is.

And now my next step is—that the awakened conscience is just like the sense of pain in the physical world, it has got a work to do, and a mission to perform. It is meant to warn you off dangerous ground. Thank God for pain! It keeps off death many a time. And in like manner thank God for a swift conscience that speaks. It is meant to ring an alarm-bell to us, to make us, as the Bible has it, "flee for refuge to the hope that is set before us." My imploring question to my young friends now is: "Have you used that sense of evil and wrong doing, when it has been aroused in your consciences, to lead you to Jesus Christ, or what have you done with it?"

There are two men in this book of the Acts of the Apostles who pass through the same stages of feeling up to a certain point, and then they diverge. And the two men's outline history is the best sermon that I can preach upon this point. Felix becoming afraid, recoils, shuts himself up, puts away the thing that disturbs him and settles himself back into his evil. The Philippian jailer becoming afraid (the phrases in the original being almost identical), like a sensible man tries to find out the reason of his fear, and how to get rid of it; and falls down at the Apostles' feet and says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The fear is not meant to last; it is of no use in itself. It is only an impelling motive that leads us to look to the Savior, and the man that uses it so has used it rightly. Yet there comes in many a heart that transparent self-deception of delay. "They all with one accord began to make excuse." It is the history to-day as it was the history then. It is the history in such a congregation as this. There will be dozens, I was going to say hundreds, that will leave this chapel to night feeling that my poor word has gone a little way into their hardened hide; but settling themselves back into their carelessness, and forgetting all impressions that have been made. O dear young friend, do not do that, I beseech you. Do not stifle the wholesome alarm, and cheat yourself with the notion of a little delay!

II. And now, I wish next to pass very swiftly in review before you, some of the reasons why we fall into this habit of self-deceiving, indecision, and delay—"Go thy way," would be too sharp and unmistakable if it were left alone, so it is fined off: "I will not commit myself beyond to-day." "For this time go thy way and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

What are the reasons for such an attitude as that? Let me enumerate one or two of them as they strike me:—First, there is the instinctive, natural wish to get rid of a disagreeable subject,—much as a man without knowing what he is doing, twitches his hand away from the surgeon's lancet. So a great many of us do not like—and no wonder we do not like—these thoughts of the old Book about "righteousness, and temperance and judgment to come," and make a natural effort to get our minds away from the contemplation of the subject because it is painful and unpleasant. Do you think it would be a wise thing for a man, if he began to suspect that he was insolvent, to refuse to look into his books or to take stock, and let things drift, till there was not a halfpenny in the pound for anybody? What do you suppose his creditors would call him? They would not compliment him on either his honesty or his prudence, would they? And is it not the part of a wise man, if he begins to see that something is wrong, to get to the bottom of it, and as quickly as possible, to set it right? And what do you call people who, suspecting that there may be a great hole in the bottom

of the ship, never man the pumps or do any caulking, but say, "Oh! she will very likely keep afloat until we get into harbor"?

Do not you think it would be a wiser thing for you if, *because* the subject is disagreeable, you would force yourself to think about it until it became agreeable to you? You can change it if you will, and make it not at all a shadow or a cloud, or a darkness over you. And you can scarcely expect to claim the designation of wise and prudent orderers of your lives until you do. Certainly it is not wise to shuffle a thing out of sight because it is not pleasing to think about.

Then there is another reason. A number of you young people say: "Go thy way for this time," because you have got a notion that it is time enough for you to begin to think about serious things and be religious when you get a bit older. And some of you even, I daresay, have an idea that religion is all very well for people that are turned sixty and are going down the hill, but that it is quite unnecessary for you Shakespeare puts a grim word into the mouth of one of his characters, which sets the theory of many of us in its true light, when, describing a dying man calling on God, he makes the narrator say: "I, to comfort him, bid him he should not think of God. I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet."

Some of my hearers practically live on that principle, and are tempted to regard thoughts of God as in place only among medicine bottles, or when the shadows of the grave begin to fall cold and damp on our path. "Young men will be young men." "We must sow our wild oats." "You can't put old heads on young shoulders"—and such like sayings, often practically mean that vice and godlessness belong to youth, and virtue and religion to old age, just as flowers to spring and fruit to autumn. Let me beseech you not to be deceived by such a notion; and to search your own thoughts and see whether it be one of these reasons which leads you to say "Go thy way for this time."

Then again, some of us fall into this habit of putting off the decision for Christ, not consciously, not by any distinct act of saying—"No! I will not," but simply by letting the impressions made on our hearts and consciences be crowded out of them by cares and enjoyments and pleasures and duties of this world. If you had not so much to do at Owen's College, you would have time to think about religion. If you had not so many parties and balls to go to, you would have time to nourish and foster these impressions. If you had not your place to make in the warehouse, if you had not this, that, and the other thing to do; if you had not love, and pleasure, and ambition, and advancement, and mental culture to attend to, you would have time for religion; but as soon as the seed is sown and the sower's back turned, hovering flocks of light-winged thoughts and vanities pounce down upon it and carry it away seed by seed. And if some stray seed here and there remains and begins to sprout, the ill weeds which grow apace, spring up with ranker stems and choke it. "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word," and efface the impression made upon your hearts.

Here to-night some serious thought is roused; by to-morrow at mid-day it has all gone. You did not intend it to go, you did not set yourself to banish it, you simply opened the door to the flocking in of the whole crowd of the world's cares and occupations, and away went the shy solitary thought that, if it had been cared for and tended, might have led you at last to the cross of Jesus Christ. Do not allow yourselves to be drifted by the swaying current of earthly cares from the impressions that are made upon your consciences, and from the duty that you know you ought to do!

And then some of you fall into this attitude of delay, and say to the messenger of God's love:—"Go thy way for this time," because you do not like to give up something that you know is inconsistent with his love and service. Felix would not part with Drusilla, nor disgorge the ill-gotten gain of his province. Felix therefore was

obliged to put away from him the thoughts that looked in that direction. I wonder if there is any young man listening to me now who feels that if he lets my words carry him where they seek to carry him, he will have to give up "fleshly lusts which war against the soul." I wonder if there is any young woman listening to me now, who feels that if she lets my words carry her where they would carry her, she will have to live a different life from what she has been doing, to have more of a high and a noble aim in it, to live for something else than pleasure. I wonder if there are any of you who are saying, "I cannot give up that." My dear young friend! "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee! It is better for thee to enter into life blind than with both eyes to be cast into hell-fire."

Reasons for delay, then, are these: first, getting rid of an unpleasant subject; second, thinking that there is time enough; third, letting the world obliterate the impressions that have been made; and fourth, shrinking from the surrender of something that you know you will have to give up.

III. And now let me very briefly, as my last point, put before you one or two of the reasons which I would fain might be conclusive with you for present decision to take Christ for your Savior and your Master.

And I say, do not delay, but *now* choose him for your Redeemer, your Friend, your Helper, your Commander, your All; because delay is really decision the wrong way. Do not delay, but take Jesus Christ as the Savior of your sinful souls, and rest your hearts upon him to-night before you sleep; because there is no real reason for delay. No season will be more convenient than the present season. Every time is the right time to do the right thing, every time is the right time to begin following him. There is nothing to wait for. There is no reason at all except their own disinclination, why every man and woman in this place now should not now grasp the cross of Christ as their only hope for forgiveness and acceptance, and yield themselves to that Lord, to live in his service for ever. Let not this day pass without your giving yourselves to Jesus Christ, because every time that you have this message brought to you, and you refuse to accept it, or delay to accept it, you make yourselves less capable of receiving it another time.

If you take a bit of phosphorus and put it upon a slip of wood, and ignite the phosphorus, bright as the blaze is, there drops from it a white ash that coats the wood and makes it almost incombustible. And so when the flaming conviction, laid upon your hearts, has burnt itself out, it has coated the heart, and it will be very difficult to kindle the light there again. Felix said, "Go thy way, when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee." Yes! and he did send for him, and he talked with him often,—he repeated the conversation, but we do not know that he repeated the trembling. He often communed with Paul, but it was only once that he was alarmed. You are less likely to be touched by the gospel message, for every time that you have heard it and put it away. That is what makes my place here so terribly responsible, and makes me feel that my words are so very feeble in comparison with what they ought to be. I know that I may be doing harm to men just because they listen and are not persuaded, and so go away less and less likely to be touched.

Ah! dear friends, you will, perhaps, never again have as deep impressions as you have now; or at least, they are not to be reckoned upon as probable, for the tendency of all truth is to lose its power by repetition, and the tendency of all emotion which is not acted upon is to become fainter and fainter. And so I beseech you that now you would cherish any faint impression that is being made upon your hearts and consciences. Let it lead you to Christ; and take him for your Lord and Savior now.

I say to you: Do that now, because delay robs you of large blessing. You will never want Jesus Christ more than you do to-day. You need him in your early hours. Why should it be that a portion of your lives should be left unfilled by that rich

mercy? Why should you postpone possessing the purest joy, the highest blessing, the divinest strength? Why should you put off welcoming your best Friend into your heart. Why should you?

I say to you again, take Christ for your Lord, because delay inevitably lays up for you bitter memories and involves dreadful losses. There are good Christian men and women, I have no doubt, in this world now, who would give all they have if they could blot out of the tablets of their memories some past hours of their lives, before they gave their hearts to Jesus Christ. I would have you ignorant of such transgression. Oh! young men and women! If you grow up into middle life not Christians, then should you ever become so, you will have habits to fight with, and remembrances that will smart and sting; and some of you, perhaps, remembrances that will pollute even though you are conscious that you are forgiven. It is a better thing not to know the depths of evil than to know them and to have been raised from them. You will escape infinite sorrows by an early cleaving to Christ your Lord.

And last of all, I say to you, give yourselves to-night to Jesus Christ, because no to-morrow may be yours. Delay is gambling, very irrationally, with a very uncertain thing—your life and your future opportunities. "You know not what shall be on the morrow."

Six-and-twenty years I have preached in Manchester these annual sermons to the young. Ah! how many of those that heard the early ones are laid in their graves; and how many of them were laid in *early* graves; and how many of them said, as some of you are saying, "When I get older I will turn religious." And they never got older. It is a commonplace word that, but I leave it on your hearts. You have no time to lose.

Do not delay, because delay is decision in the wrong way; do not delay, because there is no reason for delay; do not delay, because delay robs you of a large blessing; do not delay, because delay lays up for you, if ever you come back, bitter memories; do not delay, because delay may end in death. And for all these reasons come as a sinful soul to Christ the Savior; and ask him to forgive you, and follow in his footsteps And do it now! "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

THE RIBBAND OF BLUE.

A SERMON FOR CHILDREN.

HUGH MACMILLAN.

And that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them.—Numbers xv: 38, 39.

People have always made and used outward aids to their memory—things to enable them to remember. Sir Walter Scott tells us that when he was at school there was a boy in his class who, when he was asked for a date in history, or a fact in geography or grammar, always touched a button in his vest; it was somehow a help to recollection, so that by its means the lesson he had learned came back perfectly to his mind. His mischievous companions one day cut off the button without his knowing it; and the next time he went up for his examination he missed his familiar help, and in consequence got confused and could not remember a single thing he had learned by heart. In ancient times, when most people could not read, they put a notch in a stick, which they carried about with them, called a tally, to remind them of some important business transaction; and you know how often you yourselves have put a mark on your thumb-nail, or on your sleeve-cuff, or tied a knot in your handkerchief, or put a thread round your little finger, to put you in mind of something you had to do. God took advantage of this habit of human beings, to make them remember his own instructions. When they were in the wilderness he ordered his ancient people Israel to make a narrow ribband of blue, and put it as a border or hem upon the outer garment they wore, which was a kind of mantle or shawl. The color and shape of this ribband were to be different from those of the rest of their clothes, so as to attract their attention. And this singular ornament was to remind them every time that they looked at it, while working or resting in the house, or walking abroad, of the commandments of God.

The law was written by the finger of God upon two tables of stones; but these tables were hidden in the chest of the ark, and the mercy-seat was put as a lid over them in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle, and no eye could see them, not even the eyes of the priests themselves. The commandments written upon these tables had been proclaimed on Mount Sinai, in the hearing of the Israelites, but they could not keep them in mind. There was nothing to appeal to their eye and help their memory. They were continually forgetting God's laws, and therefore breaking them. Even the judgments of God did not brand these laws upon their remembrance. They had a terrible example given to them of the death of a transgressor who had broken God's holy law of the Sabbath. God had told his people that they were to do no manner of work, and to kindle no fire throughout their habitations on the Sabbath day. One man had forgotten that law, and he went out into the desert to gather sticks, with the object of making a fire in the laborious way known in that far-off primitive time by rubbing violently two sticks together until they began to smoke and at last to burn

He thus worked in getting the sticks, and he would have worked harder to kindle a fire with them had he been allowed. For this double offense he was stoned to death without the camp. It was a fearful penalty. This Sabbath-breaker was but a specimen of the whole nation. They were in continual danger of forgetting some one or other of the laws of God. And therefore God, in pity for their fickleness and frailty, wanted them to use a tally to aid their memory, to put a ribband of blue on the border of their outer garment, so that they might have continually before their eye a reminder of the commandments of God. Whenever they looked at the ribband of blue on the hem of their cloak, they remembered the law of the Sabbath, and the awful death of the Sabbath-breaker; and they would be afraid to do their own work on God's holy day. They would also remember the reason why God asked them to wear that blue ribband, and all the commandments of God would be impressed upon their memory, and they could not plead ignorance or forgetfulness if at any time they disobeyed them.

This ribband of blue was like the bright shining rainbow which God put upon the dark clouds after the deluge. God himself looked at this rainbow whenever afterwards it appeared in the sky after a storm, and he remembered his covenant promise that he would never more destroy the earth by a flood, and men looked at it and remembered the faithfulness of God's word, that seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter would never cease. And like the rainbow, the ribband of blue was a memory of a past judgment and a promise of a future mercy. The color of it, the lovely blue of the sky when it is purest and freest from cloud and storm, is the cloud of mercy. It is the token of God's faithfulness, which, like the blue sky, is always behind every cloud and storm undimmed and unchanged. When the thundercloud veils the sky, and the tempest bursts in fury over the earth with its destructive power, this serene blue color is for the time concealed; but we hail its reappearance as a sure sign that the storm is over and that nature is at peace. And so the blue ribband worn on their clothes was a sign that the cloud of God's wrath against sin may for a time obscure his love. But it will soon pass away, and God will return again to his goodness and mercy. The cloud is small and soon passes away—the blue sky is vast and enduring. So for a moment lasts the wrath of God, but his mercy endureth for ever. His wrath is superficial, but his love passeth knowledge. And looking at the blue ribband on his robe, this bit of serene, heavenly blue, the color of heaven itself, the Israelite would remember that behind and beyond the short-lived anger of his covenant God, on account of the sins of his people, the heavenly blue of his power and love lasted for ever, and he would be encouraged to come to him for mercy to pardon and grace to help him.

It was not to the hem of the *best* clothes of the Israelites that this ribband of blue was to be attached, but to their every-day clothes. It was not at special solemnities and when they were going up to the house of God to worship that they had this ornament to their dress, which they laid aside when they came back to their every-day work. Their common wearing dress was to be thus adorned, was to have this bit of heaven sewn to it, in order that they might thereby keep constantly in view their heavenly origin, and remember that they belonged to God, and that they were to be always holy as he who had called them was holy, in their daily walk and conversation. But you all know how the ribband of blue failed in fulfilling God's purpose. Instead of reminding the Israelites of God's holiness, and of their own obligation to be holy, it helped only to make them conceited and proud. The Pharisees afterwards made the narrow ribband broad, in order to attract the notice of men, that others might see how strictly they kept the letter of the law and how holy they were, and admire and praise them in consequence. They wore the broad blue ribband that they might be seen of men; not to remind themselves of the commandments of

the Lord that they might keep them. And thus their very religion made them worse instead of better; made their keeping of the law of God a mere display to win human applause, instead of causing them to mortify the flesh and purify the heart.

The Lord Jesus wore this ribband of blue on his dress when he was quite a little boy; and every time that he looked at it he was reminded that God had chosen him to be a holy child, and to keep his commandments. He was taught by his parents to take care of the ribband of blue whatever became of his coat. For all the Jews held it sacred, and just as we should be shocked at the mere thought of tossing about the bread and wine of the communion, so they shrank from defiling or injuring the blue ribband, which was to them the sign of a covenant with God. One of the old Hebrew teachers was asked which commandment his father bade him when a boy keep more than any other. And he answered the commandment about the blue ribband. Jesus did not require to wear a blue ribband, to remind him of the obedience which he owed to the commandments of God; for he always remembered them and kept them in thought, word, and deed. But he took our place and was made under the law like any ordinary Jew. And he kept his ribband clean and whole as an example to others, and as a proof how entirely he was in submission to the rule which God gave to his people.

This was a humbling thing for him; and it is a remarkable circumstance that God made the blue ribband on the hem of his garment, which was the sign of his humiliation, the means of his exaltation. God made that blue ribband, which showed that Jesus was made under the law, the instrument of enabling him to rise above the law and perform a wonderful miracle of divine power. A poor, sick woman came up behind him in the crowd one day, and touched the blue ribband on the hem of his robe, ignorantly thinking that there might be some virtue even in the ribband itself, and instantly she was made whole by the touch. If she had dared to touch the broad, blue ribband on the long, trailing robe of a Pharisee in the street of Jerusalem, he would have turned round and scowled at her for profaning it. But Jesus turned round, and graciously said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole."

And if you, my dear young friends, will touch the blue ribband on the robe of Jesus as it comes down to your ignorance and helplessness from the high heaven, and offers itself to the touch of the smallest child, your soul will be cleansed and healed, and you yourself will be made the means of cleansing and healing others. As through the blue ribband of Jesus' robe healing virtue flowed, so if you keep hold of it through faith, and wear it yourself and make it the dress in which a gentle and gracious character clothes itself in daily action, it will impart virtue through you to all who come into contact with you. In proportion as you are good and Christ-like, through your very dress, that which shows your real nature, the power of God will pass. The blue ribband, not of the outward pretentious display of your goodness for the praise of men, that will make you disagreeable and hateful so that people will shun you; but the blue ribband of your real inward obedience to God's holy law, that will make your simple, earnest, loving piety so attractive, blue, and serene as the heaven above you, that the poor and the timid and the ailing will love to touch it, and be benefited by it. That blue hem of your garment, like Christ's own, will do mighty miracles in the world!

THE STRAIT GATE.

JOHN M'CLINTOCK, D. D.

Then said one unto him, Lord are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, etc.—Luke xiii: 23, 24.

The teaching of our Lord and Savior was eminently practical. So far was he from introducing abstract and difficult questions into his own discourses, that he even rebuked those who brought them to him for solution. But all who came to him with such questions were sure to get good advice, even if their curiosity remained unsatisfied. The instance in our text is a case in point. One came inquiring as to the number that should be saved; and Christ bade him "strive to enter in at the strait gate." As if he had said, "It is not your business to inquire, or your interest to know, whether few or many shall be saved, but to use your most earnest endeavor to be found in that blessed number yourself. All that shall be saved, whether they be few or many, must be saved in the same way, by striving to secure the favor of God." It is the business of the Christian not to speculate upon religion, but to practice it. Christianity is not a theory but a life. It is, perhaps, not going too far, to say that all speculative inquiries which have no relation to practice are unprofitable and even hurtful. I do not wish you to understand me as dissuading you from the study of Christian doctrine, even of its more difficult topics, if you study them with reference to the Christian life. But the lesson of our text rebukes that simply inquisitive spirit which meddles with questions absolutely beyond our comprehension, or speculates upon those that are within it, simply for the sake of speculation. The tests of Christianity are not metaphysical but practical. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." It is wise for us to remember that while there is much to be *done* in our state of probation, there is comparatively little to be *known*. There is a mine of practical wisdom in the proverb,

"Do what is right in thine own affair,
The rest will of itself take care."

My simple aim in this discourse will be to develop the proposition that the great business of our life on earth should be *earnest effort to secure our salvation.*

I. The first word of the text implies, in the strongest manner, that there can be no Christian life without earnestness. The word rendered *strive,* means primarily to contend for a prize in the public games. Our English word *agonize* is derived from it. Paul makes frequent use of the ancient games—especially of the race—to illustrate the Christian career. And what higher type of earnestness could he offer, than the athlete, trained for the combat long and carefully, by rigid drill

and self-denial, stripped of all encumbrances, and straining every nerve to win the prize? Watch him as he sets out at the word, and see if you can detect any sign of indifference? Nay, every faculty is awake, and, at the sound, he bounds away. Watch him during the progress of the race, as he passes by you. Every fibre of his frame, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, quivers with the terrible earnestness of the struggle. Every sinew is strained to its utmost tension; every muscle is playing at its greatest speed; his heart beats rapidly with the high-strung effort; he will win the race or die.

Ah! this is *striving*. And Christ enjoins upon you just such earnestness as this in the Christian race. If you are careless in preparing for it, you shall not win. If you are too indifferent to the issue to deny yourself, you shall not win. If you try to carry weights, you shall not win. "So run that you may obtain; and every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

II. Another figure is employed in the text to illustrate the need of earnestness, viz.: the *strait gate*. The difficulty of the Christian's task is represented under the figure "of a narrow path, conducting through a narrow gate, into the strong citadel of eternal life." It is given more at length in Matthew (vii. 13, 14). "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because, strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The thought which underlies this figure, and even the figure itself, may be found in heathen writers. Pythagoras used to say to his followers, "there are various ways of sinning; evil is indefinite; but good is confined to one precise line." But the figure, as used by Christ, has a point and definiteness which are wanting to it when employed to illustrate mere systems of ethics. The "gate" of eternal life is strait, because "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." There is but one way to salvation; the way of earnest repentance and of sincere faith. And our text represents this way as difficult; the entrance to it is "strait."

Do not misunderstand me. There is no difficulty in religion in and of itself. Christ is not a hard master; nay, he is all love and gentleness and benignity. His words of invitation are full of grace and tenderness. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."

The commandments of God are not, of themselves, grievous. But, although the "law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," it is yet our miserable case, before we come to Christ, that "sin worketh death in us by that which is good," so that, although the law is spiritual, "we are carnal, sold under sin." It would, therefore, be a sad perversion of Christ's gracious invitations, to make them mean that no strife is necessary at the beginning of the Christian life, no earnestness in its continuance. Safe and beautiful as the narrow way is, it runs through an enemy's country.

If, then, you are about to *begin* the Christian life, make up your mind to strive earnestly. The very first step to be taken is *repentance*, and that involves not merely sorrow for your sins, but utter abandonment of them. For years, it may be, your conversation has been in the world; its evil ways are familiar to you; its evil habits have been superadded to your native corruption. It will not be an easy task to unravel the sinful web you have been weaving so long; in your own strength, indeed, it is an impossible one. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." The enemy entrenched himself in the very citadel of your heart; it will take earnest fighting and prayer to dislodge him.

Then you will find *sacrifices* necessary at the beginning, and, thereafter, in every step of the way. "If any man will come after me," says our blessed Lord, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." The flesh is to be crucified, with its affections and lusts; and, depend upon it, the flesh will cry our under the infliction. There must be a death unto sin, before there can be a life unto righteousness; and the throes of the soul in its separation from sin are like the pangs that attend the dissolution of soul and body. True, in escaping from sin, the soul breaks its chains and slips away from a disgraceful and destroying bondage; but yet, it is a slavery which the unregenerate soul delights in; it hugs its fetters lovingly.

Again, you will find earnest strife necessary in breaking away from sinful company and associations. The gate itself is "strait," but you will find the difficulty increased by the crowd standing always about it, and urging you not to go in. Many of them are your friends—some, perhaps, your kindred; your own flesh and blood may stand in the way to hinder you. At all events, the mass of mankind is going the other way; and oh! how easy it is to go with the crowd! If you are bent upon separating from them, and on going the safer way, with better company, though fewer, make up your mind to *strive.* The world will not let you escape without a struggle. Every weapon will be tried; flattery, seduction, threats, sneers—you will certainly meet some of these; perhaps you may meet them all. Ah! you will need to be in *earnest,* in order to press your way on, against the points of all these spears.

But, perhaps, you have formed no bad associations. You have been brought up in a Christian household, and environed, from childhood, by blessed influences. Instead of hindering you in the Christian life, all at home will help you. If so, thank God for your happy lot. A Christian education is one of the richest blessings that can befall a child. But do not fancy that because you have enjoyed it, you shall be able to get in at the "strait" gate without earnest effort. The adversary of men knows how to prepare special baits for just such souls as yours. With his native craft sharpened by ages of experience, he lies in wait for you; to lull your fears; to hinder your believing; to stupefy your conscience; to inject evil thoughts into your heart. He will, if possible, make you appear pure in your own eyes, though yet unwashed from your filthiness; make you fancy yourself "rich and increased in goods," while you are yet "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Do not dream, then, with such an enemy, so subtle and so skillful, always tracking your path, that you shall be able to "enter in at the strait gate" without earnest strife.

Do I say all this to discourage you? Nay, but to warn and stimulate you. I dare not deceive you. Easy as Christ's yoke is, it is still a "yoke" for the unregenerate soul. But, after all, it is the price of the only true rest. It is good for you to bear this yoke; nay, it is essential to true freedom. Were I to describe the way of holiness as smooth and easy from the beginning, you would soon come back to me with bitter reproaches, and tell of the lions you had encountered. What then? Do you find it hard to repent? Nevertheless, "strive to enter in." Do you find it hard to believe? Still cry, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief," and "strive to enter in." Have you been seeking Christ for many days without obtaining light or comfort? Depend upon it, you are still, consciously or unconsciously, cherishing some sin, preserving some idol, clinging to your self-righteousness, or keeping up your unbelief. Strive earnestly to "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset you." Let not the devil tempt you to give up the pursuit; you are safe while striving; but give up the effort, and your immortal soul is imperiled.

Thus far, I have spoken only of the difficulties that beset the beginning of the

Christian life; but in its *continuance* you will find them still. It will require the same earnest endeavor to keep your hold upon Christ as to secure it. Many err here, believing that when the soul is once converted the work is done. Vain dream! the Christian life is a warfare, from the beginning to the end. It is quite possible to "run well for a season," and then to drop by the wayside, or to turn off into one of the by-paths which the devil keeps always open, with flowery entrances and attractive fingerboards, to seduce the unwary. Your faith will not go untried, even after God has accepted you in Christ. He will uphold you in every trial, if you keep your fidelity; but you will find it necessary at every step to watch and pray, to fear and to struggle. You will be tried by all the old seductions that formerly prevailed with you, and by all the new allurements that the ingenuity of the adversary can invent. You will find "fightings without and fears within," all calling for intense and continued earnestness in this spiritual strife.

"But is it God's object to drive us out of the way?" Nay, but "he will put strength in you," if you are faithful. Christ said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The object of all trial is your final glorification,—"that the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." There is no hint in scripture of the possibility of final failure in the case of any who "fight the good fight of faith" to the end; but the Bible is full of warnings against security, against forgetfulness, against ceasing to strive earnestly. No matter what stage of Christian experience you may be permitted to reach, you shall never, on this side of the dark river, be beyond the duty of bearing arms and using them in the fight; you shall never reach the point in which you ought not every day to say:

My soul, be on thy guard,
  Ten thousand foes arise,
The hosts of sin are pressing hard,
  To draw thee from the skies.

Oh, watch, and fight and pray,
  The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day
  And help divine implore.

But, at the same time, remember there is no fear so long as you continue earnest and striving.

Surrounded by a host of foes,
  Stormed by a host within,
Nor swift to flee, nor strong to oppose,
  Single against hell, earth and sin—
Single, yet undismayed I am,
  I dare believe in Jesus' name.

III. The *necessity of earnestness* is further enforced by Christ in the text, in the fearful declaration, "Many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." It is fearful, indeed; but do not pervert it, and so make it more fearful than it is. Christ does not say that any who really strive to enter in shall fail. There is no such case on record in the Bible, or in the history of Christ's kingdom on earth. No prodigal ever repented and returned to the house of our Father without receiving a welcome. But Christ does refer to those who, having neglected to enter in at the strait gate, seek

some other mode of entrance. He does refer to those who, having failed to go in when the door was open, shall come to it with vain pleas for mercy, after it is shut and barred for evermore.

Here a third figure is introduced—that of the marriage supper; a figure so often used that it has become part of the Christian thought itself: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

The master waits to receive his guests until they are assembled; then he rises and shuts the door. None can be admitted afterward. The day of grace is over—the day of judgment is begun. If you have failed, during the allotted time, to secure the wedding-garment, you will find no substitute for it then. If you have never "striven to enter in at the strait gate" while it was open, and the master's servants were inviting and urging you to come in, you shall seek admittance in vain when the door is shut.

Be in earnest, then, while the time of mercy lasts. Strive, while strife will avail. How soon the door will be shut against you no man knows. You are alive and within the reach of mercy today; tomorrow you may be dead, and "there is no discharge in that war." Put your hand at once to the work of saving your soul, and "do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." If you sow not in the spring, no labor will avail in the harvest. "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Use them wisely for your soul's salvation; for the hours of darkness will surely follow.

And now, choose at which gate you will enter. The broad way is apparently easy and plain; it is crowded with travelers. Men of all classes are walking in it, seemingly happy and unconcerned, except to gather all the fruits and flowers that hang so temptingly by the wayside. The great men of the world are there; soldiers whose names fill the ear of nations; statesmen accustomed to deal with the destinies of empires; scholars that have widened the limits of human knowledge and wrung nature's closest secrets from her grasp of ages; poets whose creations of beauty shall be a joy to mankind forever; artists that have caught the trick of nature; all these you may find in that way. Strong men and beautiful women are treading it with mirth and gladness, with joys and banquetings, "and the harp and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine are in their feasts." But yet, their way leads to *death.* They "regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands"; and so "their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp shall descend into hell."

Go not in the way with them. The gate of life stands open; and, strait as it seems, it has admitted an innumerable company, and the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. Christ stands beckoning you to enter; his invitation is broad and urgent—"whosoever will, let him come." The way looks difficult, I grant; nay, it *is* difficult; but the difficulty will lessen as you advance. The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. The longer you walk in it the more delightful you will find it. It is the "king's highway of holiness"; a way on which the vulture's eye hath never gleamed, on which the lion and the lion's whelps have never trodden. It is the way in which "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Enter in at the strait gate; walk in this narrow path, and it will end infallibly in glory, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life. Christ, the Lord, will be your companion and friend on the way, and at the end of it will crown you with everlasting joy.

RELIEF AFFORDED BY CONFESSION.

JAMES McCOSH.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.—Ps. xxxii: 1-5.

This is a psalm of praise; but of praise on the part of one who has come through a certain experience which is detailed for our benefit.

THE PSALMIST HAD KEPT SILENCE.

There is a time to keep silence. It may be when God is speaking in the wonders which he works and the judgments which he inflicts; it is then our duty to listen. We read (Rev. viii: 1) that "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." How long this half-hour in heaven's time lasted in earth's time we cannot tell, for heaven's chronometer is not the same with ours. "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." This silence in heaven was on the occasion of the opening of the seventh seal, when the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound; "and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." In the works of nature there is silence when all things proceed regularly and benignantly. The sun, moon, and stars move, and the plants grow and bud and blossom, without noise. Silence is broken when things become deranged, and the tempest raves, and thunders utter their voices in order to restore the equilibrium. There is a time for man to be silent, when all is as it should be, and he has nothing to do but admire and adore. But there is a time for man to speak, and he cannot hold his peace without committing sin; there are calls, loud calls on the part of duty and of God, for man to speak out. When God is displaying his grandeur and crowning us with loving-kindness, then should our heart be filled with adoration and gratitude, and our mouth with praise. "Let the people praise thee, let all the people praise thee, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof." There are times when man cannot keep silence without contracting guilt. Living beings are exposed to danger, are rushing over a precipice, and we must needs warn them. Evil principles are inculcated, and we must meet the error. Evil practices are committed, and we must denounce them. Our children and those intrusted to our care are in danger of being seduced into sin, and we have to admonish them. Our friends and companions are walking in the wrong path, and we should seek to bring them back. To refuse to speak in such circumstances is cowardice, and involves criminality.

It is clear that the Psalmist, in keeping silence, had been doing wrong. We can gather what it was that made him restrain utterance, and gave him such painful-

ness. We argue it from the way by which he got deliverance when he spoke out. He said, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." Sin had been committed, and the fruits were fermenting and fomenting in his bosom, gendering turmoil and breeding corruption. For a time he allowed it to dwell there, even as the Canaanites who had not been extirpated were allowed to dwell in the land of Canaan after the children of Israel had conquered it. "The Canaanites would dwell in that land; yet it came to pass when Israel was strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute." So sin will dwell in our souls, and we fondle and turn it into a means of enjoyment. We have not the courage to look at these sins as sins, and to cast them out from what ought to be the temple of the Lord. We try as far as possible not even to notice them. We prefer thinking of our supposed excellences, of the good deeds we have done, of our talents, courage, prowess, generosity, and roll these as a sweet morsel under our tongue. We decline thinking on the abuse made of the gifts bestowed on us,—on our ingratitude, ungodliness, our lusts cherished, our envy, our evil temper, our selfishness. There will be times, indeed, when these iniquities are forced upon our attention by the accusations of conscience or the reproaches of our fellow-men, or by the troubles into which they bring us. But on these occasions we put ourselves on the defensive and parry off the attack; and when these weapons of defense are wrested from us, then we bring excuses and urge palliations, referring to extenuating circumstances, or pleading seductions, or pointing to the fairer side of the offense, to the pleasure it gave, or the kindness or frankness which characterized it. Under such pretexts as these we keep silence when we should speak out, when we should confess the sin and acknowledge the transgression, cast them out from our hearts and slay them before the Lord.

WHEN HE KEPT SILENCE HE WAS TROUBLED.

He expresses himself strongly: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." There is a wasting of the strength; the "bones," the emblem of strength, "wax old." The same effect is produced as by a fever, in which there may be fierce struggling followed by exhaustion. The fire cannot get exit, and smoulders; and it burns and blackens and consumes all within. There is no articulate voice, no confession to give relief, and so there is a "roaring all the day long,"—the roaring as of a bull that is beaten, as of wind in a confined cavern, as of water boiling in a whirlpool. "All the day long," as the troubling element cannot find an outlet by which to discharge itself. In all this there may be more than mere human powers, than mere outbursts of feeling; there may be the hand of God lying heavy upon us. "Day and night." Yes; in the brightest day there may be the discharge of thunder from heaven. When I say, "My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life. I loathe it; I would not live alway; let me alone; for my days are vanity." God is speaking in awful tones as at Sinai, with fire and blackness and darkness and tempest; or in tender tones through his Son, who did not strive, but was gentle unto all men, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But when there is "the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words,"—it may be that when they thus hear the voice "they entreat that thy words should not be spoken to them any more, for they cannot endure that which is commanded." There is a fight like that which we have witnessed between wild beasts in a cage from which none of them can escape. God's hand is heavy

upon us. God speaks. He speaks in the conscience; saying, this deed, this thought was evil. He speaks in the Word, saying, "The wages of sin is death." He speaks to us by his Spirit, striving to subdue the resistance. But the ear is stopped, that it may not hear; or when the voice is so loud that it cannot but be heard, no attention is paid to it, or it is openly disobeyed. There is now a terrible conflict. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow." There is a voice commanding, but there is a determined effort to drown it, as loud and dismal as the sound of the gong which was used in Mexico to drown the cry of the tortured and bleeding human victims on the altar. What earnestness in the voice demanding, the voice entreating! but there is equal earnestness in the struggles resisting, and the hatred resenting. No wonder that "the moisture is turned into the drought of summer." For in such a wringing of the soul all life and hope are apt to be crushed out. The terrible heat, exceeding that of a tropical sun, burns up every living thing. The soul is left as an arid waste, without a scrap of vegetation. "He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." The heart resisting, and bent on turning back, is turned like Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, hard and acid; and it stands a visible memorial of the mercy of God despised, and looks as if it never could be melted. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Is this stone of obstinacy and bitterness to stand there forever? Blessed be God, if there be a fire that hardens, there is a fire that melts. Let us pray, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth." Let us observe the blessed issue.

THE PSALMIST CONFESSES HIS SINS.

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord."

THE PSALMIST HAD HIS SINS FORGIVEN.

"Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." I mean to treat of these two topics very much together.

When God's hand is laid heavily upon us, the object is to bring us down to our knees by the weight of it. So far as mere natural feelings and wishes are engaged in the struggle, they are busily employed in resisting each other, and thereby producing disturbance. But God's hand is heavy, and may be laid on so heavily that it overcomes all opposition. This is the work to which our Lord refers when he promises when he "is come, he will reprove [or convince] the world of sin," adding, "of sin, because they believe not on me." The man has been made to see the dreadfulness of his condition, as it is in itself, as he feels it to be, and as it is in the sight of God. By the power above him and pressing on him he is made to yield and submit. He gives way under the hand laid heavily upon him, and which is pressing him down to his very knees. He is thus brought low that he may venture to look up. As he does so, he sees a reconciled face irradiated with smiles, and hears a voice pleading with him and beseeching him. But will the holy and offended God be gracious? May he not try him and prove him? Be the result what it may, he will venture. The pain, the discomfort, the misery are pressing him. The face is smiling, the voice is pleading. "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender

mercies?" He cannot, he will not believe it. "And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." He can keep silence no longer. He feels that he must speak out. The power above and a power within constrain him. His dumb struggles, his senseless roaring are turned into an articulate voice: "Jesus, have mercy on me." The crisis has come; the battle is fought; the victory is won. "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." In obedience, the soul answers, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." "What, Lord, wouldst thou have me to do?" Repent and believe. The assent of the mind is gained, and the consent of the heart is added. "With the heart the man believeth, and with the tongue he maketh confession." The silence, so sulky, is broken: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." This voice of confession bursting the imprisoned heart pierces the clouds that have hitherto enveloped the heavens, and reaches the ear of the Father, and simultaneously there is a voice: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." "And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

There are not a few misapprehensions as to the nature of this forgiveness. Even those who know and feel that they need it, often do not know the way in which to find it, and so have to say, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" They have sinned, and so they acknowledge that they need forgiveness. But then they will repent, and so earn it. They have sinned, but they will make amends by their future conduct. They will pay for their pardon, and thus have a claim upon it. They will confess their transgressions unto the Lord, and this will make an offended God propitious. But it is not thus that God dispenses pardon, bartering it for something given or done by us, and thus allowing us merit and a sense of merit. The forgiveness has been earned, has been bought by a great price by Christ's own blood, but it cannot be purchased by us by any works, by any sacrifices. It is presented as a free gift, and must be so accepted.

Few men are so ignorant or so hardened as to maintain that they have never committed sin. All who believe in a holy God must admit that they need forgiveness from him who cannot look on sin but with hatred and abhorrence. But men are not willing to part with a sense of merit. They will have the grace, but they must have some credit in it. So they will work, to make up for past neglect of work. They shall suffer for their sins, and so make atonement for them. They will submit and confess, and so appease the wrath of God. So they mix up their own righteousness with the righteousness of Christ. They will work, acknowledging their work to be imperfect, but expecting to have it perfected by the work of Christ. They will do so much, and Christ, out of pity for their weakness, will do the rest. Thus many toil for long years, for a lifetime, to work out a righteousness of their own. This is the avowed doctrine of the Church of Rome. Men must work, they say, and Christ's work will make theirs acceptable. But, my friends, peace can never be had on such a plan; for on it persons can never be sure that they have wrought enough to be received. After toiling for years in business, in study, in prayer, in attendance on the forms of religion, they are made to feel that something is wanting. After climbing so long they see the unapproachable height above them unreached and frowning upon them like Sinai with thunders and lightnings. After saying, "I have seen an end of all perfection," they are obliged to add, "but thy commandment is exceedingly broad," far beyond our power to compass it. But in all this we are setting up another gospel which is not the gospel of the grace of God. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Cease, I beseech you, from these efforts to construct a righteousness of your own which will not amalgamate

with the righteousness of Christ, and the idol you set up is like the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar: the toes being part of iron and part of clay, which did not cleave one to another, and the whole was "broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and no place was found for them." The gospel of God is not, Do so much, and Christ will complete your work; but it is on this wise: The work is completed. Christ could say, ere he died, "It is finished"; and now he says, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

We thus see the relation between the two things mentioned in this passage,—the confession of sin, and the forgiveness of sin. We are not to understand that the confession can merit the forgiveness. The confession can no more merit the forgiveness than the forgiveness can merit the confession. Both are gifts of God, and so bound together that you cannot have the one without the other. An old author represents Christ as coming to us with a gift in each hand. In the one hand he holds out forgiveness, free forgiveness; in the other hand he holds out repentance and confession. If we begin to say, "We are very willing to take the one of these; we know we have sinned, and are most anxious to have the forgiveness; but as to this wringing repentance and its proper fruit, a humbling confession, we wish to avoid them," then Christ will give us neither. But if in simple faith we will only take both, we shall receive both "without money and without price." At the same instant that we break silence and cry in faith for mercy, heaven also breaks the awful silence, and the mercy is bestowed and received.

There is an evident propriety in connecting the two—the forgiveness and confession—by a link which cannot be broken. The forgiveness cannot be had when there is no repentance and no confession. Till it is cast out by acknowledgment, the sin will abide in the heart as a dead load to sink it, as a putrid mass to corrupt it. It is when we acknowledge and cast out our transgressions that we find them forgiven. And what a relief to be thus delivered from the burden! Such is the blessedness, when we give up the struggling, the "roaring all the day long," and break the silence; peace descends as a shower and waters the soul as a river. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold of me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." You remember that on a day much to be remembered in ancient Israel, the high priest, representing the people, and in the view of the people, did confess the sins of the children of Israel over the head of a scape-goat, which was immediately after led away into the wilderness and supposed to bear away the sins of the people. So let us confess the sins of the past, that they may not lie as a burden upon us,—the sins of our youth and the sins of our riper years, the sins of our thoughts, the sins of our tempers, the sins of our feelings, the sins of our conversation, the sins of our conduct, the sins of which we have been guilty in secret, when no human eye saw us, and the sins of which we have been guilty in the intercourse with our fellow-men, the sins of our daily duties, the sins of our holy things,—let us confess all these over Christ as the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; and as far as the east is distant from the west, so far will he remove all our transgressions from us.

Two points yet remain. We treat them together, as they are wrapped up in each other.

THERE IS THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE MAN WHOSE SIN IS FORGIVEN

"Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

THE GUILE IS TAKEN OUT OF THE SOUL WHEN IT HAS ACKNOWLEDGED ITS TRANSGRESSIONS AND HAS ITS SINS FORGIVEN.

"In whose spirit there is no guile."

THE PROMISE AND ASSURANCE IS BLESSEDNESS.

"Blessed is the man." What does this mean? What is implied in *blessedness,*—the blessedness so often promised in the Psalms?

The man who is blessed has the favor of heaven, and is receiving, and is entitled to receive, not of merit but of grace, benefits many and precious. Adopted into God's family, he has the privilege of sonship. We have access at any time to our heavenly Father, once it may be offended, but now reconciled. "In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." We reason, "If men who are evil know how to give gifts unto their children, much more will our Father who is in heaven give all good things to them that ask him." "All good things" we are sure that we will get; all that is for our good, guidance, restraint, light, and peace. The night is past, the cloud is lifted, and we walk in the light,—in the light of God's countenance.

But who are thus blessed? They whose iniquities are forgiven. Till this is done, there is a sentence pronounced and a curse lying on us. It is in the form of a debt which we cannot pay; of a burden weighing heavily upon us. We apply for aid, and are told that the debt is not paid. We would walk and run, and find that we are bent down to the earth by the load. This will continue till the debt is paid, till the burden is removed; but then we can look up and behold our heavenly Father's face smiling on us. We can now say, "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" We can now look all men in the face. We add to our faith, virtue,—that is, courage. We are prepared to face the evil and follow the good, and we walk and run in the way of God's commandments. As long as sin is unconfessed, and therefore we may be sure unforgiven, there is deceit in us. We have first to defend ourselves from an accusing conscience. We begin with denying the offense, and then we palliate it. In doing this, we have to use pretexts and we follow crooked courses, and thus learn habits of self-deception. It is first self-deception; we deceive ourselves. A profound writer remarks that having first deceived ourselves, all other deception becomes easy. We have to keep up fair appearances, and in order to this, to conceal and evade and put on disguises.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!"

As the process goes on there come equivocation, and in the end lying and hypocrisy. The result is a spirit of guile. We see this beginning even in children, in their exertions to conceal their faults and magnify their virtues, that thus they may stand high in the view of those with whom they come in contact. It comes out more conspicuously in schools and colleges where youths resort to a variety of means, it may be tricks, to keep up a false show in the view of their fellow-students and instructors. It is apt to become confirmed with advancing years and by professional work, and it may become a hardened cement in old age. Our state thus becomes like that in which our Lord found the temple at Jerusalem when he entered it and "found there those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money

sitting." We know what the Lord of the temple did on that occasion. "He made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." Now, when Christ enters the heart of the sinner, which ought to have been his temple, he acts in much the same way when he finds it filled with worldly objects and defended by chicanery and deceit. He proceeds to purify it in the way we have been contemplating. His hand is heavy upon us, and all to press out the deceit. He reproves, he rebukes with all long-suffering, but with all faithfulness, till he wrings the acknowledgment from us, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord," followed by the assurance, "Thou forgavest me the iniquity of my sin."

And now the crowded bosom finds relief; the confined soul experiences enlargement; the fettered spirit is free; the gates of brass and the bars of iron are cut down; the prison doors are thrown open, and the soul walks at liberty and expatiates abroad, on before untrodden ground, and gazes on new and lovely scenes. New affections are called forth, and new-born feelings spring up. The evil humors have been let out, and the body feels health returning, and with health, motive and activity. The noise of bartering is hushed, and the merchandise is cast out, that the worship of God may proceed undisturbed, and pure sacrifices be offered, and the voice of prayer and praise rise to heaven. The fight is ended, and the victory is won. "The winter is over and gone," and with it the cold and frosts, and the time of the singing of birds is come, and the plants bud, and the flowers blossom and throw out their perfume into the air, that it may be wafted all around. Iniquity has been committed, but is not "imputed." The sin is "covered," not allowed to remain as an offensive mass of putrefaction to spread malaria and weakness, temptation and corruption, but is covered out of sight, being cast into the great purifier,—the sea of Christ's blood. The conscience, the moral eye, is purged, and clearly discerns between the good and the evil, and being disgusted with the evil which has wrought such mischief, repels it as its worst foe, and swears (as Hannibal did) on the altar to wage eternal warfare against it.

This is the gospel method. It does not say to the helpless sinner, "Do this and live." This was the method with the first man, who did not do this, and so did not live. But it is, Here is life. "Live and do this." When Christ came into Peter's house, he found "his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever, and he touched her hand and the fever left her"; and then she arose and "ministered unto them." So Christ when he comes bids us arise, and we arise to serve him in the love of the heart and the obedience of the life.

Among other things driven out is the guile. We hate it because it has deceived us, and we feel that we can never put trust in it again. We have seen through its hollow pretences and its sophistic arguments. We know that it has been a liar from the beginning, and we refuse to listen to it. In the rectification of the soul the "crooked places" have been made straight by our conquering and advancing Lord. The man has had power with God like Israel of old, and has prevailed, and now has become like Nathanael, an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile. In the washing of regeneration the soul has been purified and whitened, and no pollution will remain on it. We have heard a better voice,—of him who hath delivered us out of the horrible pit and the miry clay into which the siren had allured us, and we are resolved to follow that voice whithersoever it may lead us; and it sets our feet on a rock, establishing our goings. We continue to hear the voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it"; and it conducts through sincerity and honesty to purity and heaven.

THE PASSOVER.

JOHN McNEIL.

Exodus xii: 21-23.

I should like tonight, dear friends, to speak about the Atonement, and instead of going to the New Testament for a text, we shall take the story of the Passover and be at once in both the Old Testament and the New. Exodus, 12th chapter. . . . "And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb." "Every man according to his eating." That is a new way to estimate a man—how much he can eat. (Some of you would stand high in that estimation.) But the point here is very obvious; the biggest man here in God's estimation has the biggest capacity for receiving God's grace and God's word. The smallest man here is the man who is weak and squeamish and dyspeptic, has no appetite for eating and drinking in God's grace and truth. I know the world's estimate is different. The world wants to make us believe in these days that the big man is the skeptic. If there is any young fellow in here filled with skepticism, don't let the devil deceive you because of some defect in your intellect. I want to let you down gently; you have got a big intellect, but it is twisted. It is out of condition.

"Every man according to his eating." According to the Bible then, the strongest man is the man with the biggest appetite and digestion for the Word of God.

Verse 22: "And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out of his house until the morning."

Verse 23: "For the Lord shall pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you."

Did it happen? Yes, it happened. I am reading no tradition, nor superstition. I am reading common school, impartial history. The only impartial history book in the world is the book I am reading now. There is no bias here; no partiality; no misstatement. It happened! Listen! "And it came to pass"—it did, men and women—"it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt; . . . and there was a great cry in Egypt." There never was one like it. There never will be another until that which shall surely come, when the Lamb that was slain shall return, and all kindred of the earth shall wail because of it. "There was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." But, behind the blood mark on the lintel and the side posts, not a hair of the head had perished. God was as good as his word of judgment. God was as good as his word of mercy. He is the same God in Christ tonight.

I want to speak about the Passover; about this lamb. All through the Bible a silent index finger is pointed to that night in Egypt. You never needed to say any

more to an Israelite, except "that night in Egypt." The preachers and prophets and the poets and psalmist speak of that night in Egypt. When you come to the New Testament, that "night in Egypt" plays its part again. I Cor. v:7: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Looking with one glance to this historic Passover, and then with another glance to that evening outside Jerusalem's walls, when Jesus was crucified, Paul says that the one event runs into, is explained by and perpetuated by the other, when he says "Christ our passover is" slain, or "sacrificed for us." Therefore, let us keep our memorial feast, the sacrament of the Lord's death until he come.

What I have to say tonight is very simple. It is to turn to this old rubric and ritual about the first Passover to see why it is, what it is, where it is that Jesus died on the cross. He does for my soul in all its guilt and doom and danger what the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the posts and side posts did for the Israelites on that night, the history of which is now before us. And Christians will pray, if there are those here who have not yet seen the Lamb of God, and have not yet sprinkled the blood, that they may do so tonight.

Salvation that night in Egypt, and salvation tonight here can be described as salvation from impending doom. Over all the land hung that dark cloud, Jehovah will pass through the land of Egypt this night to smite the first born. It was salvation from impending doom. Over all this world still hangs one threatening cloud, God's righteous judgment upon sin. Of course, I know this truth is not popular in the 20th century. All the Gospel asks is, "Preach me." "Don't explain me and defend me." "Let me loose, and I will conquer." I say that doctrine is not popular. I almost feel the air getting stiff with opposition in a Christian Church when I get back to these elementary and elemental truths of God's revelation. It is salvation from impending doom. I know folks like to think we have altered all that. We haven't altered God and his character and his law; and we haven't altered sin and sinners. I know there is a kind of preaching today that virtually says, I will pass through the land and smite. We are to say nothing. It is to be nothing but love, love, love. That is what is emptying churches. This modern God of love is not the God of the Bible. There is no such God.

I tell you, brother preachers, we are needing to begin the battle and fight it all over again. This namby-pamby Gospel is no Gospel at all. There is no backbone in it, and folks despise the nature of it, and often despise the man who preaches it. No, there is a stroke; there is a smite; there is an impending doom.

Of course, you know what brought the stroke. It was Pharaoh. My dear friends, I have examined Pharaoh and I have examined you and me. Do you know all the difference I can find between Pharaoh and you and me in our natural treatment of God is a difference that is rather in favor of Pharaoh. Pharaoh did not sin against such light, such love, such patience as we trample under foot every day, if we have not come to put our trust under the blood of the great sacrifice and him who gave it. If Pharaoh did not escape, how shall we escape if we (mark the next word; not reject, and blaspheme and rail and curse), how shall we escape if we *neglect* so great a salvation? Let us never weaken that side of God's character and that side of God's revelation. Salvation from impending doom.

But I pass to a more congenial theme. Nobody likes to preach this, but I must preach it. Salvation that night in Egypt meant freedom for the slave, for the Israelites toiling in the brick fields, the task-masters' curses forever in their ears and the lash on their backs until the blood spurted. God heard their cry and came down to redeem them. And, dear friends, salvation which we preach through the blood of the Lamb, means freedom for the slave. Glory to God! I stand and preach a salvation tonight from a bondage, compared with which the bondage of Egypt was a light

affliction, enduring only for a moment. God pity you and me whose bondage is the bondage of the spirit, whose fetters are not fetters that beat into the wrist and ankle and hamper our physical freedom. Glory to God, the salvation we are permitted to have through Jesus Christ means that men and women can go out of these doors tonight forever free; the chains struck off; the sore tyranny and opposition of the devil as he draws you to hell through drink and lust and care and sorrow and worldliness, these chains struck off, and the soul brought out of a prison house. My heart kindles while I think of it. The salvation that we preach in Jesus Christ means freedom for the slave. Brother preachers, let us register a vow that by his grace, his Gospel shall get a hearing. And, if Jesus Christ be lifted up, there is a music in our speech. He will draw the slaves of sin to himself and liberate them.

It was not only salvation from impending doom. With the stroke that Pharaoh's sin deserved, and that our sin deserved, still more—for we have sinned against more light, and love and knowledge—there were two elements at work, love and fear. If a man didn't love to obey, then fear came in as a spur in his lazy sides to make him pass in with his first born.

The moment you speak of fear, up starts young America, and young Great Britain, and says: "Oh, Mr. McNeil, you are a bugbear; we have altered all that. You are not to speak of fear now in New York, Philadelphia, Boston or Chicago. Fear is unworthy. Fear is not intellectual. That is an utterly selfish way." You will hear men say it—some of your very nice young men and young women. You will be a discerner of the thoughts, secrets of the heart of these dainty people. You will find out their religion and their theology every time. Men come and say, "Mr. McNeil, if you don't draw me by love, you will never drive me by fear." Prodigious "me." What a fellow you are! "If you don't draw me by love, you will never drive me by fear." My dear young people, if you talk like that, you provoke me to say, you are neither worth drawing nor driving. I am pretty sick of that claptrap.

Why should we speak of fear as such an unworthy motive? We are moved by fear every day to do wise and sane things. Why did you insure your house. Isn't it practically because your neighbor had a house and it took fire, went up in a fiery chariot and came down in dirty soot, but was not insured? You had been thinking of insuring, but made quick work of it after your neighbor's was burned. Maybe you insured your house for pure love of paying insurance premiums; you are such a benevolent gentleman that you can't see an insurance agent without giving him an order. I am sure the insurance agents will move around where you live. It was through fear, and it moved you to do a most sane, intelligent, wise thing. You remember when you were taking a walk in the country with your little lad on a Saturday or some afternoon, you came to a level crossing—those death-traps in this country. And, just as you came to the crossing the express from Pittsburg came down. I rather think you allowed the express to have the crossing just as long as it wanted it. You didn't go on, saying: "We were here first; who's afraid." No, you were not such an ass. Man, do you remember when the express passed by and shook the earth? You remember how your little boy's hand tightened a little in yours, and your hand instinctively tightened a little over his, and how you were standing in absolute safety? That was an instinctive fear that the Creator implanted in you from the protoplasm, that works automatically in the direction of keeping you back from threatened bodily danger. Shall God not use that fear in our souls to keep us from dashing ourselves to pieces against his holy, righteous judgments upon sin? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." That is why some of you haven't struck it yet. That is why they haven't learned it in Boston, in certain circles. They haven't gotten to be wise, for they haven't known the fear of the Lord. They are deficient in intellect as well as in heart, for it is an intellectual thing, a true fear of God. Why, you know

Noah measured as much around the head and around the heart as anybody I have seen in the states or in our own country, and Noah wasn't one of those little whipper-snappers who say, "If you don't draw me by love, you can't drive me by fear." Yet, "Noah, moved by fear, built an ark"—and no slough could build an ask; it needed brains and intellect—"for the saving of his house." And, I tell you that ark was as strongly built by an arm which was moved by fear of God's coming judgment on impenitent sin as though his arm had been moved by sheer love. David says, in our Scotch metre:

"For fear of thee, my very flesh
Doth tremble, all dismayed;
And of thy righteous judgments, Lord,
My soul is much afraid."

The grandest men we ever had in Scotland were the Covenanters and they have done you no harm in America. They brought some of the best blood over here. The Puritans feared to tamper with God revealed in the Word. Twenty thousand people in my bonny Scotland lost their lives in the killing times, but you could not burn out of them their fear to tamper with God and his Word and their conscience. They were stalwarts, and handed down to me blood-bought liberties that I am afraid we value all too loosely.

Oh, this claptrap about love and fear. By all means, let us come to Jesus Christ, drawn by love. But who comes? Isn't it kind of God, when the best motive fails, that he doesn't leave us, but he uses the lower motive to get us to do the wisest thing we ever did, and then a better and higher and purer motive will come, and it does come.

Salvation "that night" was through the blood of the lamb. (Now I want to come just to the kernel of the nut.) It was through sacrifice; through blood shedding. Take a lamb and keep it up for a few days. Type and picture of Jesus Christ. It was to be without spot and blemish and kept for a few days, and if any spot came out it should be put away. Jesus was kept in this world for thirty-three years and no blemish was found in him. "We find no fault in him." "Surely, this was a righteous man." God secured it for his Blessed One, that the very article of his sacrifice testified to his absolute innocence.

The actual word, substitution, is not in the Bible, but the eternal truth running from beginning to end, and long before the Bible began, is substitution. "He is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." Dear friends, I am coming to the very core of the gospel. God help me to set it forth. This is the bone in the gospel sleeve. Take away the atonement, and the gospel is an empty sleeve, no saving arm in it.

We need to teach in the interest of men's souls: That Jesus Christ, first of all, is my atoning sacrifice, that he bore my sins "in his own body on the tree." If God only sent Jesus Christ to be my beautiful moral example, then that was the most cruel thing that God could have done; to send me an example that crushes me to despair, the more I try to copy him. Ah, no; he is our Savior first. I ask honestly, and in fair reading of the New Testament, if Christ is to be allowed to know his own mind? What was his view? It was this: "No man taketh my life from me. I have power to lay it down; I have power to take it up again." How that goes crashing like a cannon ball through these moral theories of to-day. Oh, if you want intellectual preaching, as well as true preaching, commend me to the old gospel, for its intellectual strength, consistency and vigor. Turn the Bible any way you like. Twist it any way you like, it comes back to its original position. He died for us. He bore my sins. He was made sin for me; substitution.

Then there is the bunch of hyssop. Actually telling them how to sprinkle the blood. I believe that the bunch of hyssop was in a woman's hand twenty times a day for scouring purposes. If hyssop had been a rare plant, requiring a botanical excursion to find it, God's plan would have broken down, for the blood in the basin saved not. Not a bit of modern philosophy; we are not saved in some vague wholesale sense. Christ died. Glory to God! For a long time it was a prophecy. If you are a doubter about that, your doubt comes a day too late; you are doubting that which has happened. That is not particularly intellectual. Christ *has* died. The cross has been planted in this earth. He has risen again, and if his death did so much for us, what shall not his life accomplish? But, the blood *in the basin* saves nobody. It is the personal application. You must claim your own share out of that great redeeming act.

What is that bunch of hyssop? It is just *faith.* My dear friends, just look at Christ on the cross. I think there was just one man who had the right view of Christ on the cross. It was not any of the priests, for they thought he was an impostor. It was not the disciples, for they stumbled at the cross, and were heartbroken. They thought it was the hour of defeat. I think it was Barabbas. Barabbas should have been the third criminal executed that day. But it was the Passover, and Barabbas was released and Christ selected in his place. I think I see him come up into the crowd, gaze on the face of Jesus and say to himself, "Whoever you are, whatever you are, and I hear them crying all sorts of things about you; but for you I would have been hanging there in shame and guilt, with hell all about me."

Somebody will say, "What about election?" Man, I am strong on election. But what is the mark of election? The mark of election is to put your hand in Jesus Christ's and then he will tell you whether you are elected or not. Suppose this were a great temple, and suppose this were the last day and that God had proclaimed that if you came into this building you would be saved. Now, I imagine a man coming out of the woods there, and in the dark, with pick and shovel and spade is hacking away at the foundations of this building. I say, "My dear friend, what is the matter?" He says, "This is the last day, the judgment is coming, but I will be saved if I get in through that building." He is digging away to get in through the foundations. And I say, "Man, come here and I will show you something." I take him around to the front door of this great temple of salvation, and over the door in great blazing letters I show him these words: "Whosoever will, let him enter." He looks and he reads; he rolls down his sleeves. "My," he says, "that's nice; that's the best thing I ever read." But when he crosses the threshold and comes in, over the platform he reads: "Chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world." Do you think that will send him backing out into the night again? Man, don't go digging, digging to come in through the foundation. Come in at the hole the mason left open for you, the door. God give you as much intellect as that, even if you are from Boston.

Is there any poor sinner here to-night unsaved? All you have to do is to take the bunch of hyssop. You will find that you are then in the hands of the Almighty and Eternal God. Look to Jesus. As the oak is in the acorn, and the full-grown man is in the babe, so eternal life and glory are in that trembling faith that has come into you heart. Faith in Jesus Christ who died for you and lives again.

Oh, Spirit of God, reveal to us our Savior, and may we meet, a blood-sprinkled band, upon the eternal shore.

THE UNNATURALNESS OF DISOBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL.

HENRY MELVILL.

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth; before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? —Galatians iii: 1.

It is to be observed that the Galatians, here addressed, were not Jews; neither had they been dwellers in Jerusalem, when Christ died upon the cross. It was not therefore true of them, any more than of ourselves, that, with the bodily eye, they had beheld Jesus crucified. If the Savior had been evidently set forth before the Galatians, sacrificed for sin, it could only have been in the same manner as he is set before us, through the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments. There was no engine brought to bear on the Galatians, except that of the miracles which the first teachers wrought, which is not also brought to bear upon us; and the miracles were of no avail, except to the making good points on which we profess ourselves already convinced. If therefore the very gospel which St. Paul preached, be preached in our hearing, and the very sacraments which he administered, be administered in our assemblies, it may be said of us, with as much propriety as of the Galatians, that "Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among us."

The greater distance at which we stand from the introduction of Christianity does not necessarily occasion any greater indistinctness in the exhibition of the Savior. It was not the proximity of the Galatians to the time of the crucifixion which caused Christ to appear as though crucified among them: for once let a truth become an object of faith, not of sight, and it must make way by the same process at different times—there may be diversity in the evidence by which it is sustained, there is none in the manner in which it is apprehended.

We may therefore bring down our text to present days, and regard it as applicable, in every part, to ourselves. There are two chief topics which will demand to be handled. You observe that the apostle speaks of it as so singular, that men should disobey the truth, that he can only ascribe it to sorcery or fascination. You observe also that he grounds this opinion on the fact, that Christianity had been so propounded to these men, that Christ himself might be said to have been crucified among them. We shall invert the order of the text, believing that it may be thus most practically considered. In the first place, it will be our endeavor to show you, that there is nothing exaggerated in our declaring of yourselves, that "before your eyes Christ Jesus hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you." In the second place, we shall make this fact a basis on which to ground a question to those who are yet neglectful of the soul, "Who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth?"

Now we are bold to claim at once a high character for the ministrations of the gospel, and shall not attempt to construct a labored proof of their power. We do not substantiate our claim by any reference to the wisdom or energy of the men by whom

these ministrations may be conducted; for Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase. It is altogether as a divinely instituted ordinance that we uphold the might of preaching, and contend that it may have such power of annihilating time, and reducing the past to present being, as to set Christ evidently before your eyes, crucified among you. We are assured, in regard of the public ministrations of the word, that they are the instituted method by which the events of one age are to be kept fresh through every other. And, on this account, we can have no hesitation in using language with regard to these our weekly assemblings, which would be wholly unwarranted, if we ascribed the worth of preaching, in any degree, to the preacher. When the services of God's house are considered as an instrumentality through which God's Spirit operates, we may safely attribute to those services extraordinary energy.

We say therefore of preaching, that it must be separated as far as possible from the preacher; for it is only when thus separated, that we can apply to it St. Paul's assertion in our text. I might now bring before you a summary of the history of Christ. I might evoke from the past the miracles of Jesus, and bid you look on, as the sick are healed, and the dead raised. I might lead you from scene to scene of his last great struggle with the powers of darkness, and summon you to behold him in the garden, and at the judgment-seat, on the cross and in the grave. And then, as though we were actually standing, as stood the Israelites, when the fiery serpents were abroad, round the cross which sustained that to which we must look for deliverance, might I entreat you, by the hopes and fears which center in eternity, to gaze on the Lamb of God as the alone propitiation for sin. This I might do; and this has been often done from this place. And shall we hesitate to affirm, that, whensoever this is done, Jesus Christ is "set forth, crucified among you?" It is not that we can pretend to throw surpassing vividness into our representations. It is not that we can claim such power of delineation as shall renovate the past, and cause it to re-appear as a present occurrence. It is not, that, by any figure of speech, or any hold on your imaginations, we can summon back what has long ago departed, and fix it in the midst of you visibly and palpably. It is only, that as intercession has been appointed to perpetuate the crucifixion of Christ—so that, as our Advocate with the Father, he has continually that sacrifice to present, which he offered once for all upon Calvary—so has preaching been appointed to preserve the memory of that death which achieved our redemption, and to keep the mighty deed from growing old.

The virtue therefore which we ascribe to our public discourses, is derived exclusively from their constituting an ordained instrumentality; and our confidence that the virtue will not be found wanting, flows only from a conviction that an instrumentality, once ordained, will be duly honored, by God. We believe assuredly that there is at work, in this very place, and at this very moment, an agency independent of all human, but which is accustomed to make itself felt through finite and weak instruments. As the words flow from the lips of him who addresses you, flow apparently in the unaided strength of mere earthly speech, they may be endowed by this agency with an energy which is wholly from above, and thus prevail to the setting Christianity before you, with as clear evidence as was granted to those who saw Jesus in the flesh. So that, if there were nothing entrusted to us but the preaching of the word, if we had no sacraments to administer, we should feel, that, without presumption, we might declare of our hearers what St. Paul declared of the Christians at Galatia. Yea, so deep is our persuasion of our living under the dispensation of the Spirit, and of preaching being the chief engine which this Spirit employs in transmitting a knowledge of redemption, that, after every endeavor, however feeble and inadequate to bring under men's view "the mystery of godliness," we feel that practically as much is done for them as though they had been spectators of Christ's expiatory

sufferings; and therefore could we boldly wind up every such endeavor, by addressing our auditors as individuals, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among them."

But you are to add to this, that not only is there the preaching of the gospel in our churches; there is also the administration of sacraments. We will confine ourselves to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as furnishing the more forcible illustration. It is said by St. Paul, in reference to this sacrament, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come"—an explicit assertion that there is in the Lord's Supper, such a manifestation of the crucifixion of Jesus, as will serve to set forth that event until his second appearing. And we scarcely need tell you, that, inasmuch as the bread and the wine represent the body and blood of the Savior, the administration of this sacrament is so commemorative of Christ's having been offered as a sacrifice, that we seem to have before us the awful and mysterious transaction, as though again were the cross reared, and the words, "It is finished," pronounced in our hearing. We have here the representation by significative action, just as in the case of preaching, by authoritative announcement. For no man can partake of this sacrament, with his spiritual sensibilities in free exercise, and not seem to himself to be traversing the garden and the mount, consecrated by a Mediator's agony, whilst they witness the fearful struggles through which was effected our reconciliation to God.

And if we attach weight to the opinion of the church in her best days, we must hold that there is actually a sacrifice in the Eucharist, though of course not such as the papists pretend. Christ is offered in this sacrament, but only commemoratively. Yet the commemoration is not a bare remembering, or putting ourselves in mind; it is strictly a commemoration made to God the Father. As Christ, by presenting his death and satisfaction to his Father, continually intercedes for us in heaven, so the church on earth, when celebrating the Eucharist, approaches the throne of grace by representing Christ unto his Father in the holy mysteries of his death and passion.

From the beginning it has been always the same awfully solemn rite, which might have attested and taught Christianity, had every written record perished from the earth. All along it has been the gospel preached by action, a phenomenon of which you could give no account, except by admitting the chief facts of the New Testament history, and which might, in a great degree, have preserved a knowledge of those facts, had they never been registered by evangelists. It is like a pillar erected in the waste of centuries, indelibly inscribed with memorials of our faith; or rather, it is as the cross itself, presenting to all ages the immolation of that victim who "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And so long as this sacrament is administered in our churches, men shall never be able to plead that there are presented to them none but weak and ineffective exhibitions of Christ. If the crucifixion be not vivid, as delineated from the pulpit, it must be vivid as delineated from the altar. And it is nothing that hundreds absent themselves from the great celebration, and thus never witness the representation of the crucifixion. They are invited to that celebration, they are perfectly aware of its nature, and their remaining away can do nothing towards lessening its solemnities, and stripping it of energy as an exhibition of Christ's death. And whilst men are members of a church in whose ordinances the Lord's death is continually shown forth, we can be bold to address them, whether they neglect or whether they partake of those ordinances, in the very terms in which St. Paul addressed the Galatians of old. Yes, whatever our infirmities and deficiencies as preachers of the everlasting gospel, we take high ground as intrusted with dispensing the sacrament of the Eucharist: and whilst we have to deliver the bread of which Christ said, "Take, eat, this is my body," and the cup of which he declared, "This is my blood of the New

Testament," we may look an assembly confidently in the face, and affirm that there are proffered them such exhibitions of the sacrifice of the Mediator, that Jesus Christ is evidently set forth before their eyes crucified among them.

But we have now, in the second place, to assume that the facts of the gospel are thus brought vividly before you, and to infer from it that disobedience to the truth can only be ascribed to fascination or witchcraft. The question, "Who hath bewitched you?" indicates the persuasion of the apostle, that the gospel of the crucifixion was eminently adapted to make way upon earth. And this is a point which perhaps scarcely receives its due share of attention. We know so well that there is practically a kind of antipathy between the doctrines of Christianity and the human heart, that, whilst we admit the necessity of a supernatural influence to procure them reception, we never think of referring to sorcery to explain their rejection. It seems so natural to us to disobey the truth, however clearly and forcibly propounded, that, when disobedience is to be accounted for, there appears no need for the calling in witchcraft.

Yet there is, we believe, a mistake in this, and one calculated to bring discredit on the gospel. If you represent it as a thing quite to be expected, that men would disobey the gospel—just as though the gospel were so constructed as to be necessarily repulsive—you invest it with a character at variance with the wisdom of its Author; for you declare of the means, that they are not adapted to the end which is proposed. And we wish to maintain, that, situated as fallen men are, the gospel of the crucifixion adapts itself so accurately to their wants, and addresses itself so powerfully to their feelings, that their rejection of it is a mystery, in the explaining of which we are forced to have recourse to the witch's fascinations. We reckon that the great truth of Christianity, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" for its rescue, is so fitted for overcoming the obstinacy, and melting the hearts of humankind, that it must be matter of amazement to higher orders of intelligence, that it should be heard with indifference or rejected with scorn. Angels, pondering a fact which appears to them more surprising than the humiliation and death of the everlasting Word—the fact that redeemed creatures reject their Redeemer—may propose amongst themselves the very question of our text, "Who hath bewitched them that they should not obey the truth?"

We shall not include in our investigations into the fairness of this question the case of the open infidel, who professedly disbelieves the whole of Christianity. We omit this case, not because we think that it is not to be accounted for as the result of some species of fascination, but only because it is not one of those directly intended by St. Paul. As to the fascination or witchcraft, it scarce admits debate. For we can never allow, that, where reason has fair play, and the intellect is permitted to sit in calm judgment on the proofs to which Christianity appeals, there will be aught else but a verdict in favor of the divine origin of our religion. So mighty are the evidences on which the faith rests, that, where there is candor in the inquirer, belief must be the issue of the inquiry. And wheresoever there is a different result, we can be certain that there has been some fatal bias on the reasoning faculties; and that, whether it have been the sorcery of his own passions, or of "the prince of the power of the air," the man has been as verily spell-bound throughout his investigations, as though with Saul he had gone down to the cave of the enchantress, and yielded himself to her unhallowed dominion.

But we pass by this case, and come at once to the considering, whether the gospel of Christ be not admirably calculated for making way to the conscience and the heart, so that the marvel is not that it should here and there win a convert, but rather that it does not meet with universal success.

Let it first be observed with how surpassing an energy this gospel appeals to the fears of mankind. We say, to the fears—for it were indeed to take a contracted view

of Christianity, to survey it as proffering mercy, and to overlook its demonstrations of wrath. If Jesus Christ have been "evidently set forth, crucified among you," there has been exhibited to you so stern a manifestation of God's hatred of sin, that, if you can still live in violation of his laws, some fascinating power must have made you reckless of consequences. There is this marvelous combination in the gospel scheme, that we cannot preach of pardon without preaching of judgment. Every homily as to how sinners may be forgiven, is equally a homily as to the fearfulness of their doom, if they continue impenitent. We speak to men of Christ as bearing their "sins in his own body on the tree," and the speech seems to breathe nothing but unmeasured loving-kindness. Yet who, on hearing it, can repress the thoughts, what must sin be, if no finite being could make atonement; what must its curse be, if Deity alone could exhaust it? And yet, with the great mass of men, this appeal to their fears is wholly ineffectual. Is it that the appeal is not sufficiently energetic? is it that it is not framed into such shape as to be adapted to beings with the passions and feelings of men? Is it that there is nothing in our nature, which responds to a warning and summons thus constructed and conveyed? We cannot admit the explanation. The crucifixion is a proclamation, than which there cannot be imagined a clearer and more thrilling, that an eternity of inconceivable wretchedness will be awarded to all who continue in sin. And yet men do continue in sin. The proclamation is practically as powerless as though it were the threat of an infant or an idiot. And we are bold to say of this, that it is unnatural. Men have the flesh which can quiver, and the hearts which can quake; and we call it unnatural, that there should be no trembling, and no misgiving, when the wrath of the Almighty is being opened before them, and directed against them.

And if unnatural, what account can we give of their disobeying the truth? Oh, there have been brought to bear on them the arts of fascination and sorcery. I know not, in each particular case, what hath woven the spell, and breathed the incantation. But there must have been some species of moral witchcraft, by which they have been steeled against impressions which would otherwise have been necessarily produced. Has the magician been with them, who presides over the gold and silver, and persuaded them that wealth is so precious that it should be amassed at all risks? Has the enchantress who mingles the wine-cup, and wreathes the dance, been with them, beguiling them with the music of her blandishments, and assuring them that the pleasures of the world are worth every penalty they incur? Has the wizard, who, by the circlings of his wand, can cause the glories of empire to pass before men's view, as they passed, in mysterious but magnificent phantoms, before that of Christ in his hour of temptation, been with them, cajoling them with dreams of honor and distinction, till he have made them reckless of everlasting infamy? We say again, we know not what the enchantment may have been. We know not the draught by whose fumes men have been stupefied, nor the voice by whose tones they have been infatuated. But we know so thoroughly that the gospel, published in their hearing, is exactly adapted for the acting on their fears, for the filling them with dread, and moving them to energy, that, when we behold them indifferent to the high things of futurity, and yet remember that "Christ Jesus hath been evidently set forth, crucified among them," we can but resolve the phenomenon into some species or another of magical delusion; we can but ply them with the question, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?"

But it is saying little, to say that the gospel addresses itself to the fears of mankind; it is equally adapted for acting on feelings of a gentler and more generous description. The effect of the fall was not to banish from man's breast "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report;" but rather—and this is far more melancholy, as proving alienation from God—that, whilst there can yet be the play of fine and

noble emotions between man and man, there is nothing of the kind from man towards his Maker.

Those sympathies, which are readily called into exercise by the kindness and disinterestedness of a fellow-creature, seem incapable of responding to the love and compassion of our benevolent Creator. That statue, so famed in antiquity, which breathed melody only when gilded by the sunbeams, was just the opposite to man in his exile and alienation. No lesser rays, whether from the moon or stars, could wake the music that was sepulchred in a stone. The sun must come forth, "as a giant to run his race," and then the statue responded to his shinings, and hymned his praises. But not so with man. The lesser rays can wake some melody. The claims of country, or of kindred, can excite him to correspondent duties. But the sun shineth upon him in vain. The claims of God call forth no devotedness: and the stone which can discourse musically in answer to the glimmerings of philosophy, and the glow of friendship, is silent as the grave to the revelation of God and his Christ.

We declare of the Gospel, that it addresses itself directly to those feelings, which, for the most part, are instantly wakened by kindness and beneficence. Take away the divinity from this Gospel, reduce it into a record of what one man hath done for others, and it relates a generous interposition, whose objects, if they evinced no gratitude, would be denounced as disgracing humanity. If it be true that we naturally entertain sentiments of the warmest affection towards those who have done, or suffered, some great thing on our behalf, it would seem quite to be expected that such sentiments would be called into most vigorous exercise by the Mediator's work. If in a day when pestilence was abroad on the earth, and men dreaded its entrance into their household, we could carry them to a bed on which lay one racked by the terrible malady; and tell them that this individual had voluntarily taken the fearful infection, and was going down in agony to the grave, because complying, of his own choice, with a mysterious decree which assured him, that, if he would thus suffer, the disease should have no power over their families—is it credible that they would look on the dying man with indifference; or that, as they harkened to his last requests, they would feel other than a resolve to undertake, as the most sacred of duties, the fulfilling the injunctions of one who, by so costly a sacrifice, warded off the evil with which they were threatened? And yet, what would this be, compared with our leading them to the scene of crucifixion, and showing them the Redeemer dying in their stead? You cannot say, that, if the sufferer on his death-bed would be a spectacle to excite emotions of gratitude, and resolutions of obedience, the spectacle of Christ on the cross might be expected to be surveyed with carelessness and coldness. Yet such is undeniably the fact. The result which would naturally be produced is not produced. Men would naturally feel gratitude, but they do not feel gratitude. They would naturally be softened into love and submission, and they manifest only insensibility and hard-heartedness.

And what are we to say to this? Here are beings who are capable of certain feelings, and who show nothing of those feelings when there is most to excite them; beings who can display love to every friend but their best, and gratitude to every benefactor but their greatest. Oh, we say—and it is the unnaturalness of the exhibition which forces us to say—that enchantment has been at work, stealing away the senses, and deadening the feelings. In all other cases the heart has free play; but in this it is trammelled, as by some magical cords, and cannot beat generously. Satan, the great deceiver, who seduced the first of humankind, has been busy with one sort or another of illusion, and has so bound men with his spells that they are morally entranced. We know not, as we said in the former case, what may have been the stupefying charm, or the coercive incantation. We have not gone down

with them to the haunts of the sorcerer, that we might know by what rites they have thus been humanized. But they would never be indifferent where there is most to excite, and insensible where there is all that can tell upon their feelings, if they had not surrendered the soul to some power of darkness, some beguiling and o'ermastering passion, some agency which, like that pretended to by the woman of Endor, professes to give life to the dead. And therefore remembering, that, as grafted into the Christian church, they are men "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among them," we cannot see them manifesting no love to the Savior, and yielding him no allegiance, without feeling that this their vehement ingratitude is wholly unnatural, and without therefore pressing home upon them the question, "Who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth?"

We may certainly add, that, as addressing itself to men's hope, the Gospel is so calculated for making and retaining disciples, that nothing but the workings of sorcery will explain its rejection. It must be remembered that Christ, as Mediator, not only gained our pardon, but procured for us everlasting happiness. And if we must judge the immenseness of the escaped punishment, we must judge also that of the proffered glory, by the fact that our substitute was none other than a person of the Trinity. If Christ Jesus is set before men, crucified among them, they are manifestly taught, that, as the price paid is not to be computed, neither is the happiness of which it was the purchase. And they are beings keenly alive to their own interests, readily excited by any prospect of good, and who exhibit the greatest alacrity and vigor in pursuing such plans as promise them advantage. It is moreover their natural constitution, to forego a present for a future and far greater good, and to submit cheerfully to privations, in hopes of receiving what shall be more than equivalent. We call this their natural constitution; and we therefore, further, call it unnatural, and demonstrative of strange and sinister influence, that they should choose the trifling in preference to the unmeasured, and give up the everlasting for the sake of the transient. Yet this men do when they disobey the Gospel. The Gospel addresses itself directly to their desire after happiness. It makes its appeal to that principle in their nature, which prompts them to provide for the future at the expense of the present. In every other case they harken to such address, and respond to such appeal. But in this case, which differs from every other only in the incalculable superiority of the proffered good, they turn a deaf ear, and wear all the appearance of a natural incapacity of being stirred by such an engine as the Gospel brings to bear.

What account shall we give of this? A principle of their nature is in full vigor, except in the instance in which there is most to excite it, and then it seems utterly extinguished. They can pursue a future good, unless it be infinite, and be moved by any prospect of happiness, except of everlasting. There must have been sorcery here; and we have no difficulty in determining how the magician has worked. The devil has practiced that jugglery which causes the objects of faith to shrink into insignificance, and those of sense to dilate into magnitude. There has been the weaving of that spell which circumscribes the view, so that, though a man can look forward, he never looks beyond the grave. There has been the drinking of that cup of voluptuousness, of which whosoever partakes is maddened into longing for yet deeper draughts. It is sorcery, it is witchcraft. Men would not hesitate, if an earthly good were to be secured on the conditions of the Gospel; and they refuse, when the good is heavenly, only because they had suffered themselves to be beguiled, and cheated, and entranced. There is a charm upon them, and their own passions have sealed it, binding them to love the world, and the things that are in the world. There is an enchanted circle, which their indulged lusts have traced, and within

which they walk, so that they cannot expatiate over the vast spreadings of their existence. There is a siren voice, and their own wishes syllable its whispers, telling them there is no cause for haste, but that hereafter it will be soon enough to attend to eternity. And thus there is no defect in the Gospel. It is adapted, with the nicest precision, to creatures so constituted as ourselves. But we live in the midst of gorgeous deceits, and brilliant meteors. The wizard's skill, and the necromancer's art are busied with hiding from us what we most need to know; and our eyes are dazzled by the splendid apparitions with which the god of this world peoples his domain; and our ears are fascinated by the melodies in which pleasure breathes her incantations; and thus it comes to pass, that we are verily "bewitched" into disobeying the truth.

Would to God that we might all strive to break away from the seductions and flatteries of earth, and give ourselves in good earnest to the seeking happiness in heaven! And what is it that we ask of men, when we entreat them to escape from the magician, and live for eternity? Is it that they should be less intellectual, less philosophical? On the contrary, religion is the nurse of intellect, and philosophy is most noble when doing homage to revelation. It is not intellectual to live only for this world, it is not philosophical to remain ignorant of God. Is it that they should surrender their pleasures, and walk a round of unvaried mortification? We ask them to surrender nothing which a rational being can approve, or an immortal vindicate. We leave them every pleasure which can be enjoyed without a blush, and remembered without remorse. We ask only that they would flee those vices whose end is death, cultivate those virtues which are as much the happiness as the ornament of man, and propose to themselves an object commensurate with their capacities. This, let them be assured, is practical Christianity—to shun what, even as men, they should avoid, and pursue what, even as men, they should desire.

Shall we not then beseech the Almighty, that we may have strength to break the spell, and dissolve the illusion? The Philistines are upon us, as upon Samson, and we are yet, it may be, in the lap of the enchantress. But all strength is not gone. The Spirit of the living God may yet be entreated; and the razor of divine judgment hath not swept off the seven locks wherein our might lies. And therefore, however bewitched, each amongst us may yet struggle with the sorcerer who has bound him; and we can assure him that there is such efficacy in hearty prayer to the Lord, that, if he cry for deliverance, the green withes shall be "as tow when it toucheth the fire," and the new cords be broken like a thread from his arms.

SOWING AND REAPING.

D. L. MOODY.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.—Galatians vi: 7-8.

I think this passage contains truths that no infidel or skeptic will dare to deny. There are some passages in the Word of God that need no other proof than that which we can easily find in our daily experience. This is one of them. If the Bible were to be blotted out of existence, the words I have quoted would be abundantly verified by what is constantly happening around us. We have only to take up the daily papers to see them being fulfilled before our eyes.

I remember giving out this text once, when a man in the audience stood up and said:

"I don't believe it."

I said, "My friend, that does not change the fact. Truth is truth, whether you believe it or not; and a lie is a lie, whether you believe it or not."

He did not want to believe it. When the meeting broke up, an officer was at the door to arrest him. He was tried and sent to prison for twelve months for stealing. I have no doubt that when he got into his cell he believed that he had to reap what he sowed.

We might as well try to blot the sun out of the heavens as to blot this truth out of the Word of God. It is heaven's eternal decree. The law has been enforced for six thousand years. Did not God make Adam reap even before he left Eden? Had not Cain to reap outside of Eden? A king on the throne, like David, or a priest behind the altar, like Eli; priest and prophet, preacher and hearer—every man must reap what he sows. I believed it ten years ago; but I am more convinced of this truth now than ever.

My text applies to the individual, whether he be saint or sinner, or hypocrite who thinks he is a saint; it applies to the family; it applies to society; it applies to nations. I say the law that the result of actions must be reaped is *as applicable to nations as to individuals;* indeed, some one has said that as nations have no future existence, the present world is the only place to punish them as nations. See how God has dealt with them. See if they have not reaped what they sowed. Take Amalek: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindermost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God." What was to be the result of this attack? Was it to go unpunished? God ordained that the Amalekites should reap as they sowed; and the nation was all but wiped out of existence under King Saul.

What has become of the monarchies and empires of the world? What brought ruin on Babylon? Her king and people would not obey God; and ruin came upon

them. What has become of Greece and all her power? She once ruled the world. What has become of Rome and all her greatness? When her cup of iniquity was full, she was dashed to the ground! What has become of the Jews? They rejected salvation, persecuted God's messengers, and crucified their Redeemer; and we find that eleven hundred thousand of them perished at one time. Look at the history of America. With an open Bible our forefathers planted slavery; but judgment came at last. There was not a family North or South that had not to mourn over some one taken from them. Take the case of France. It is said that a century ago men were spending millions every year in France in the publication and distribution of infidel literature. What has been the harvest? Has France not reaped? Mark the result: "The Bible was suppressed. God was denied. Hell broke loose. Half the children born in Paris were bastards. More than a million of persons were beheaded, shot, drowned, outraged, and done to death, between September, 1792, and December, 1795. Since that time France has had thirteen revolutions in eighty years; and in the Republic there has been an overturn on an average once in nine months. One-third of the births in Paris are illegitimate; ten thousand new-born infants have been fished out at the outlet of the city sewers in a single year; the native population of France is decreasing; the percentage of suicides is greater in Paris than in any city in Christendom; and since the French Revolution there have been enough French men and women slaughtered in the streets of Paris in the various insurrections to average more than two thousand five hundred each year!"

The principle was not new in Scripture or in history when Paul enunciated it in his letter to the Galatians. Paul clothes it in language derived from the farm; but in other dress the Law of Sowing and Reaping may be seen in the Law of Cause and Effect, the Law of Retribution or Retaliation, the Law of Compensation. It is not to my purpose to enter now into a philosophical discussion of the law as it appears under any of these names. We see that it exists. It is beyond reasonable dispute. Whatever else skeptics may carp at and criticise in the Bible, they must acknoweldge the truth of this. It does not depend upon revelation for its support; philosophers are agreed upon it as much as they are agreed upon anything.

THE SUPREMACY OF LAW.

The objection may be made, however, that while its application may be admitted in the physical world, it is not so certain in the spiritual sphere. It is just here that modern research steps in. The laws of the spiritual world have been largely identified as the same laws that exist in the natural world. Indeed, it is claimed that the spiritual existed first, that the natural came after; and that when God proceeded to frame the universe, he went upon lines already laid down. In short, that God projected the higher laws downward, so that the natural world became "an incarnation, a visible representation, a working model of the supernatural." "In the spiritual world the same wheels work—without the iron."

Our whole life is thus bounded and governed by laws ordained and established by God; and that a man reaps what he sows is a law that can be easily observed and verified, whether we regard sowing to the flesh or sowing to the Spirit. The evil harvest of sin and the good harvest of righteousness are as sure to follow the sowing as the harvest of wheat and barley. "Life is not *casual*, but *causal*."

We shall see, as we proceed, that *the working of the law is evident in the earliest periods of Bible history.* Job's three friends reasoned that he must be a great sinner, because they took it for granted that the calamities that overtook him must be the results of his wickedness. "Remember, I pray thee," said one of them, "who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same."

In the book of Proverbs we find it written: "The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward." And again: "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity."

In Isaiah we find these words: "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

Hosea prophesied regarding Israel: "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." "Sow to yourselves in righteousness," he advised them; "reap in mercy."

TEACHING FROM ANALOGY.

The Bible is full of analogies drawn from nature. When Christ was on earth, it was his favorite mode of teaching to convey heavenly truths in earthly dress. "Truths came forth from his lips," wrote one, "not stated simply on authority, but based on the analogy of the universe. His human mind, in perfect harmony with the Divine mind with which it was united, discerned the connection of things, and read the eternal will in the simplest laws of nature. For instance, if it were a question whether God would give his Spirit to them that asked, it was not replied to by a truth revealed on his *authority*: the answer was derived from facts lying open to all men's observation. 'Behold the fowls of the air'; 'behold the lilies of the field'—learn from them the answer to your question. A principle was there. God supplies the wants he has created. He feeds the ravens—he clothes the lilies—he will feed with his Spirit the craving spirits of his children."

This is the style of teaching that Paul adopts in the text. He takes the simple process of sowing and reaping, a process familiar to all, and reads in it a deeply spiritual and moral meaning. It is as if he said that every man as he journeys through life is scattering seed at every step. The seed consists of his thoughts, his words, his actions. They pass from him; and by and by, it may be sooner or later, they spring up and bear fruit, and the reaping time comes.

LIFE A SEED-TIME.

The analogy contains some solemn lessons. Life is to be regarded as a seed-time. Every one has his field to sow, to cultivate, and, finally, to reap. By our habits, by our intercourse with friends and companions, by exposing ourselves to good and bad influences, we are cultivating the seed for the coming harvest. We cannot see the seed as it grows and develops; but time will reveal it.

Just as the full-grown harvest is potentially contained in the seed, so the full results of sin or holiness are potentially contained in the sinful or holy deed. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Just as we cannot reap a good harvest unless we have sown good seed, so we cannot reap eternal life unless we have sown to the Spirit. Weeds are easy to grow. They grow without the planting. And sin springs up naturally in the human heart. Ever since our first parents broke away from God, the human heart has of itself been thoroughly vile, and all its fruits have been evil. "The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Do you doubt it? If you do, ask yourself what would become of a child if it were left to itself—no training, no guidance, no education. In spite of all that is done for children, the evil too often gets the upper hand. The good seed must be planted and cared for, often with toil and trouble; but the harvest will be sure.

Do we desire the love of our fellows in our seasons of trial? Then we must love them when they most need its cheering influence. Do we long for sympathy in our sorrow and pain? Then we shall have it, if we have also wept with those who weep. Are we hoping to reap eternal life? Then we must not sow to the flesh, or we shall reap corruption; but to the Spirit—and the promise is that we shall reap its immortal fruits.

Dr. Chalmers has drawn attention to *the difference between the act of sowing and the act of reaping.* "Let it be observed," he says, "that the act of indulging in the desires of the flesh is one thing, and the act of providing for the indulgence of them is another. When a man, on the impulse of sudden provocation, wreaks his resentful feelings upon the neighbor who has offended him, he is not at the time preparing for the indulgence of a carnal feeling, but actually indulging it. He is not at that time sowing, but reaping (such as it is) a harvest of gratification. This distinction may serve to assist our judgment in estimating the ungodliness of certain characters. The rambling voluptuary who is carried along by every impulse, and all whose powers of mental discipline are so enfeebled that he has become the slave of every propensity, lives in the perpetual harvest of criminal gratification. A daughter whose sole delight is in her rapid transitions from one scene of expensive brilliancy to another, who dissipates every care and fills every hour among the frivolities and fascinations of her volatile society—she leads a life than which nothing can be imagined more opposite to a life of preparation for the coming judgment or the coming eternity. Yet she *reaps* rather than *sows.* It lies with another to gather the money which purchaseth all things, and with her to taste the fruits of the purchase. *It is the father who sows.* It is he who sits in busy and brooding anxiety over his speculations, wrinkled, perhaps, by care, and sobered by years into an utter distaste for the splendors and insignificances of fashionable life." The father sows, and he reaps in his daughter's life.

A famous painter was well known for the careful manner in which he went about his work. When asked why he took such pains, he replied:

"Because I am painting for eternity."

It is a solemn thing to think that *the future will be the harvest of the present*—that my condition in my dying hour may depend upon my actions today! Belief in a future life and in a coming judgment magnifies the importance of the present. Eternal issues depend upon it. The opportunity for sowing will not last forever; it is slipping through our fingers moment by moment; and the future can only reveal the harvest of the seed sown now.

A sculptor once showed a visitor his studio. It was full of statues of gods. One was very curious. The face was concealed by being covered with hair, and there were wings on each foot.

"What is his name?" said the visitor.

"Opportunity," was the reply.

"Why is his face hidden?"

"Because men seldom know him when he comes to them."

"Why has he wings on his feet?"

"Because he is soon gone; and once gone can never be overtaken."

It becomes us, then, to make the most of the opportunities God has given us. It depends a good deal on ourselves what our future shall be. We can sow for a good harvest, or we can do like the Sioux Indians, who once, when the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent them a supply of grain for sowing, ate it up. Men are constantly sacrificing their eternal future to the passing enjoyment of the present moment; they fail or neglect to recognize the dependence of the future upon the present.

From this we may learn that there is no such thing as a trifle on earth. When we realize that every thought and word and act has an eternal influence, and will come back to us in the same way as the seed returns in the harvest, we must perceive their responsibility, however trifling they may seem. We are apt to overlook the results that hinge on small things. The law of gravitation was suggested by the fall of an apple. It is said that some years ago a Harvard professor took some gipsy-moths to America in the hope that they could with advantage be crossed with silkworms. The moths accidentally got away, and multiplied so enormously that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in trying to exterminate them.

When H. M. Stanley was pressing his way through the forests of Darkest Africa, the most formidable foes that he encountered, those that caused most loss of life to his caravan and came the nearest to entirely defeating his expedition, were the little Wambutti dwarfs. So annoying were they that very slow progress could be made through their dwelling-places.

These little men had only little bows and little arrows that looked like children's playthings; but upon these tiny arrows there was a small drop of poison which would kill an elephant or a man as quickly and as surely as a Winchester rifle. Their defense was by means of poison and traps. They would steal through the darkness of the forest, and, waiting in ambush, let fly their deadly arrows before they could be discovered. They dug ditches and carefully covered them over with leaves. They fixed spikes in the ground and tipped them with the most deadly poison, and then covered them. Into these ditches and on these spikes man or beast would fall or step to their death.

A lady once writing to a young man in the navy who was almost a stranger, thought: "Shall I close this as anybody would, or shall I say a word for my Master?" and, lifting up her heart for a moment, she wrote, telling him that his constant change of scene and place was an apt illustration of the words, *"Here we have no continuing city,"* and asked if he could say: "I seek one to come." Tremblingly she folded it and sent it off.

Back came the answer. "Thank you so much for those kind words. I am an orphan; and no one has spoken to me like that since my mother died, long years ago." The arrow shot at a venture, hit home, and the young man shortly afterwards rejoiced in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace.

An obscure man preached one Sunday to a few persons in a Methodist chapel in the east of England. A boy of fifteen years of age was in the audience, driven into the chapel by a snowstorm. The man took as his text the words, "Look unto me, and be ye saved," and as he stumbled along as best he could, the light of heaven flashed into the boy's heart. He went out of the chapel saved, and soon became known as C. H. Spurgeon, the boy-preacher.

The parsonage at Epworth, England, caught fire one night, and the inmates were got out except one son. The boy came to a window, and was brought safely to the ground by two farm-hands, one standing on the shoulders of the other. The boy was John Wesley. If you would realize the responsibility of that incident, if you would measure the consequences of that rescue, ask the millions of Methodists who look back to John Wesley as the founder of the denomination.

WHEN A MAN SOWS, HE EXPECTS TO REAP.

Notice these four things about sowing and reaping: a man expects to reap when he sows; he expects to reap the same kind of seed that he sows; he expects to reap more; and ignorance of the kind of seed makes no difference.

First: *When a man sows, he expects to reap.*

If a farmer went on sowing, spring after spring, and never reaping in the autumn, you would say he was a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. No; he is always looking forward to the time when he will reap the reward of his toil. He never expects that the seed he has sown will be lost.

A young man serves a long apprenticeship to some trade or profession; but he expects by-and-by to reap the fruit of all those years of patient industry. Ask an engineer why he works so hard for five, six, or seven years in the endeavor to learn his profession. He replies that he is looking forward to the reaping time, when his fortune and reputation will be made. The lawyer studies long and hard; but he, too, anticipates the time when his clients will be numerous, and he will be repaid for his toil. A great many medical students have a hard time trying to support themselves while they are at college. As soon as they get their diploma and become doctors, they expect that the reaping time is coming; that is what they have been working for.

Some harvests ripen almost immediately; but as a rule we find it true in the natural world that *there is delay* before the seed comes to maturity. It is growing all the time, however; first the little green shoot breaking through the soil, then the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The farmer is not disappointed because all his crops do not spring up like mushrooms in a night. He looks forward with patience, knowing that the reaping time will come in due season.

So with the harvest of our actions. Few men, if any, would indulge in sin unless they expected pleasure out of it. A drunkard does not drink for the mere sake of drinking, but in the hope of present enjoyment. A thief does not steal for the mere sake of stealing, but for the sake of gain. And similarly with a good man. He does not make sacrifices merely for the sake of sacrifice, but because thereby he hopes and expects to do good, and help others. All these things are means to ends: there is always expectation of a harvest.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE REAPING.

The text bids us look forward to the certainty of the reaping: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

We know what it is to have a failure of the crops; but in the spiritual world no such failure is possible. Wet soil may rot the seed, or frost may nip the early buds, or the weather may prove too wet or too dry to bring the crops to maturity; but none of these things occur to prevent the harvest of one's actions. The Bible tells us that God will render to every man according to his deeds. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." How careful we should be of our actions in all departments of our being—physical, moral, intellectual! The deeds we do, the words we speak, the thoughts we harbor, are all recorded, and shall meet their just reward, for God is no respecter of persons.

And it must not be overlooked that *the harvest comes as a necessary consequence of the sowing.* It has been said that God is not a sort of moral despot, as he is so frequently regarded. He does not sit on a throne, attaching penalties to particular actions as they come up for judgment. He has laid down certain laws, of which the law of sowing and reaping is one: and punishment is the natural outcome of sin. There is no escape. It must be borne; and though others may have to reap *with* you, no one can reap *for* you.

Gal. vi. 7 teaches, further that *the harvest is one or other of two kinds.* There are two, and only two, directions in which the law leads: Sowing to the flesh, and a harvest of corruption; sowing to the Spirit, and a harvest of everlasting life.

SOWING TO THE FLESH.

"Sowing to the flesh" does not mean simply taking due care of the body. The body was made in the image of God, and the body of a believer is a temple of the Holy Ghost; and we may be sure that due care for the image is well-pleasing to God. The expression refers rather to pandering to the lusts of the body, pampering it, providing gratification for its unlawful desires at the expense of the higher part of a man, and indulging the animal propensities which in their excess are sinful. "Sowing to the flesh" is scattering the seeds of selfishness, which always must yield a harvest of corruption.

"When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." And what does Paul say are the works of the flesh? "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like."

I was at the Paris Exhibition in 1867, and I noticed there a little oil painting, only about a foot square, and the face was the most hideous I have ever seen. On the label attached to the painting were the words "Sowing the tares," and the face looked more like a demon's than a man's. As he sowed these tares, up came serpents and reptiles, and they were crawling up on his body, and all around were woods with wolves and animals prowling in them. I have seen that picture many times since. Ah! the reaping time is coming. If you sow to the flesh, you must reap the flesh. If you sow to the wind, you must reap the whirlwind.

And yet it must not be thought that indulgence in the grosser vices is the only way of sowing to the flesh. Every desire, every action that has not God for its end and object is seed sown to the flesh. If a man is sowing for a harvest of money or ambition, he is sowing to the flesh, and will reap corruption, just as surely as the liar and adulterer. No matter how "polite" and "refined" and "respectable" the seed may be; no matter how closely it resembles the good seed—its true nature will out; the blight of corruption will be upon it.

How foolish are the strivings of men in view of this judgment! Many a man will sacrifice time, health—even his character—for money. What does he gain? Corruption; something that is not eternal, that has not the qualities of "everlasting life." John said, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Peter said, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." None of these fleshly things have their roots in the eternal. You may even outlive them in your own short life.

NO BRIDGE BETWEEN.

Now, men make this mistake—they sow to the flesh, and they think they will reap the harvest of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, they sow to the Spirit, and are disappointed when they do not reap a temporal harvest.

A teacher had been relating to his class the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and he asked:

"Now, which would you rather be, boys—the rich man, or Lazarus?"

One boy answered, "I would rather be the rich man while I live, and Lazarus when I die."

That cannot be: it is flesh and corruption, or, Spirit and everlasting life. There is no bridge from one to the other.

"Seed which is sown for a spiritual harvest has no tendency whatever to procure temporal well-being. Christ declared, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled' (with righteousness); 'blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' You observe the beatific vision of the Almighty—fulness of righteousness—divine comfort. There is nothing earthly here; it is spiritual results for spiritual labor. It is not said that the pure in heart shall be made rich; or that they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled with bread; or that they who mourn shall rise in life, and obtain distinction. Each department has its appropriate harvest, reserved exclusively to its own method of sowing.

"Everything reaps its own harvest; every act has its own reward. And before you covet the enjoyment which another possesses, you must first calculate the cost at which it was procured.

"For instance, the religious tradesman complains that his honesty is a hindrance to his success; that the tide of custom pours into the doors of his less scrupulous neighbor in the same street, while he himself waits for hours idle. My brother, do you think that God is going to reward honor, integrity, high-mindedness, with this world's coin? Do you fancy that he will pay spiritual excellence with plenty of custom? Now, consider the price that man has paid for his success. Perhaps mental degradation and inward dishonor. His advertisements are all deceptive; his treatment of his workmen tyrannical; his cheap prices made possible by inferior articles. Sow that man's seed, and you will reap that man's harvest. Cheat, lie, be unscrupulous in your assertions, and custom will come to you. But if the price be too high, let him have his harvest, and you take yours—a clear conscience, a pure mind, rectitude within and without. Will you part with that for his harvest?"

SOWING TO THE SPIRIT.

"Sowing to the Spirit" implies self-denial, resistance of evil, obedience to the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, living in the Spirit, guidance by the Spirit. We sow to the Spirit when we use our abilities and means to advance spiritual things; when we support and encourage those who are extending the influence of the Spirit. We sow to the Spirit when we crucify the flesh and all its lusts, when we yield ourselves to him as we once yielded ourselves to the flesh. A Jewish rabbi once said: "There are in every man two impulses—good and evil. He who offers God his evil impulses offers the best sacrifice."

The fruit of such sowing is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

In this world the harvest is growth of character, deeper respect, increasing usefulness to others; in the next world, acceptance with God, everlasting life.

Among the last recorded words of William Lloyd Garrison in his public speeches in England were these: "I began my advocacy of the anti-slavery cause in the Northern States of America in the midst of brickbats and rotten eggs; and I ended it on the soil of South Carolina almost literally buried beneath the wreaths of flowers which were heaped upon me by her liberated bondmen."

A young man was employed by a large commission firm in New York City during the late civil war, to negotiate with a certain party for a lot of damaged beans. The beans were purchased, delivered, and spread out upon the upper floor of the building occupied by the firm.

Men were employed to turn them over and over, and to sprinkle them with a

solution of soda, so as to improve their appearance and render them more salable. A large lot of the first quality of beans was then purchased; some of the good beans were first put into the barrels, then the barrels were nearly filled with the poor ones; after this the good ones were again put on the top and the barrels headed up for sale.

The employer marked the barrels, "Beans—A 1." The clerk seeing this, said, "Do you think, sir, that it is right to mark those beans A 1?

The employer retorted sharply: "Are you head of the firm?"

The clerk said no more. The barreling and heading went on. When all was ready, the beans (many hundreds of barrels) were put on the market for sale. Specimens of the best quality were shown in the office to buyers.

At length a shrewd purchaser came in (no man is so sharp in business but he will often meet his equal), examined the samples in the office, inquired the price, and then wished to see the stock in bulk. The clerk was ordered to go with the buyer to the upper loft and show him the stock. An open barrel was shown apparently of the same quality of the sample. The buyer then said to the clerk:

"Young man, the samples of beans shown me are of the first quality, and it is impossible to purchase beans anywhere in the market for the price at which you offer them; there is something wrong here. Tell me, are these beans the same quality throughout the entire barrel as they appear on the top?"

The clerk now found himself in a strange position. He thought, "Shall I lie for my employer, as he undoubtedly means I shall; or shall I tell the truth, come what will?" He decided for the truth, and said:

"No, sir, they are not."

"Then," said the customer, "I do not want them." And he left

The clerk entered the office. The employer said to him: "Did you sell that man those beans?"

He said, "No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Well, sir, the man asked me if those beans were of the same quality through the entire barrel as they appeared on the top. I told him they were not. He then said, 'I do not want them,' and left."

"Go to the cashier," said the employer, "and get your wages; we want you no longer."

He received his pay and left the office, rejoicing that he had not lied for the purposes of abetting a sordid avariciousness, and benefiting an unprincipled employer.

Three weeks after this the firm sent after the young clerk, entreated him to come back again into their employ, and offered him a large increase in salary.

And thus was his honesty and truthfulness rewarded. The firm knew and felt that the man was right, although apparently they had lost largely by his honesty. They wished to have him again in their employ, because they knew that they could trust him, and never suffer through fraud and deception. They knew that their financial interests would be safe in his custody. They respected and honored that young man.

THE LESSON OF PATIENCE.

Let us learn the lesson of patience. "Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." Delay does not mean denial. Too often one generation sows and another has to reap. God is a jealous God, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate" him.

In the early years of Israel's existence as a separate people, God commanded them to give the land of Canaan rest every seventh year.

"Six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat, and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive-yard." From the anointing of Saul to be king this law was not observed. After four hundred and ninety years God gave the nation into captivity for seventy years. During this period the land had rest; seventy Sabbath years to compensate for the Sabbath years of which it had been deprived. Those Israelites sowed the bitter seed of disobedience, and their descendants had to reap the harvest in exile and captivity.

A leading surgeon performed a critical operation before his class one day. The operation was successful, as far as his part was concerned. But he turned to the class and said: "Six years ago a wise way of living might have prevented this disease. Two years ago a safe and simple operation might have cured it. We have done our best today as the case now stands; but nature will have her word to say. She does not always repeal her capital sentences." Next day the patient died, reaping the fruit of his excesses.

Paul says: "Let us not be weary in well-doing; in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

In a recent chat with an interviewer, Mr. Edison quite unconsciously preached a most powerful sermon on perseverance and patience.

He described his repeated efforts to make the phonograph reproduce the sibilant sound, and added: "From eighteen to twenty hours a day for the last seven months I have worked on this single word 'specia.' I said into the phonograph, 'specia, specia, specia'; but the instrument responded, 'pecia, pecia, pecia.' It was enough to drive one mad! But I held firm, and I have succeeded."

An insurance case was brought to Daniel Webster when he was a young lawyer. Only a small amount was involved, and a twenty-dollar fee was all that was promised. He saw that to do his client full justice, a fifty-mile journey to Boston would be desirable, in order to consult the law library. He would be out of pocket by the expedition, and for the time he would receive no adequate compensation. But he determined to do his best, cost what it might. He accordingly went to Boston and looked up the authorities, and gained the case.

Years after, Webster, who had meanwhile become famous, was passing through New York. An important insurance case was to be tried that day, and one of the counsel had suddenly been taken ill. Money was no object, and Webster was begged to name his terms and conduct the case.

"I told them," said Mr. Webster, "that it was preposterous to expect me to prepare a legal argument at a few hours' notice. They insisted, however, that I should look at the papers; and this I finally consented to do. It was my old twenty-dollar case over again; and as I never forget anything, I had all the authorities at my fingers' ends. The court knew that I had no time to prepare, and were astonished at the range of my acquirements. So you see, I was handsomely repaid both in fame and money for that journey to Boston; and the moral is that good work is rewarded in the end."

Two men were digging in California for gold. They worked a good deal and got nothing. At last one of them threw down his tools and said:

"I will leave here before we starve;" and he left.

The next day his comrade's patience was rewarded by finding a nugget that supported him until he made a fortune.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the

heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him; but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

The idea that because a person does a thing in the dark it will never be brought to light, is fatal—God says it *shall* be brought to light. It is folly for a man who has covered his sins to think there shall be no resurrection of them and no final adjudication. Look at the sons of Jacob. They sold Joseph and deceived their father. Twenty long years rolled away, and even down to Egypt their sin followed them; for they said: "We are guilty of the blood of our brother." The reaping time had come at last for those ten sons who sold their brother.

I was once preaching in Chicago, and a woman who was nearly out of her mind came to me. You know there are some people who mock at religious meetings, and say that religion drives people mad. It is *sin* that drives people mad. It is the want of Christ that sinks people into despair. This was the woman's story:—She had a family of children. One of her neighbors had died, and her husband had brought home a little child. She said, "I don't want the child;" but her husband said, "You must take it and look after it." She said she had enough to do with her own, and she told her husband to take that child away. But he would not. She confessed that she tried to starve the child; but it lingered on. One night it cried all night; I suppose it wanted food. At last she took the clothes and threw them over the child, and smothered it. No one saw her; no one knew anything about it. The child was buried. Years had passed away; and she said, "I hear the voice of that child day and night. It has driven me nearly mad." No one saw the act; but God had seen it, and this retribution followed it. History is full of these things. You need not go to the Bible to find it out.

IGNORANCE OF THE SEED MAKES NO DIFFERENCE.

Now, notice again! Ignorance of the kind of seed makes no difference. If I think I am sowing good seed, and it happens to be bad, I shall have a bad harvest; therefore, it becomes me to see what kind of seed I am sowing.

Suppose I meet a man who is sowing seed, and say: "Hallo, stranger, what are you sowing?"

"Seed."

"What kind of seed?"

"I don't know."

"Don't you know whether it is good or bad?"

"No, I can't tell; but it is seed, that is all I want to know, and I am sowing it!"

You would say that he was a first-class lunatic, wouldn't you? But he wouldn't be half so mad as the man who goes on sowing for time and eternity, and never asks himself what he is sowing or what the harvest will be.

Father, what seed are you sowing in your family? Are you setting your children a good or a bad example? Do you spend your time at the saloon or the club, until you have become almost a stranger to them? or are you training them for God and righteousness?

The story is told that a man once said he would not talk to his son about religion; the boy should make his own choice when he grew up, unprejudiced by him. The boy broke his arm, and when the doctor was setting it, he cursed and swore the whole time.

"Ah," said the doctor, "you were afraid to prejudice the boy in the right way;

but the devil had no such fear. He has led your son the other way." The idea that a father is to let his children run wild! Nature alone never brings forth anything but weeds.

One of Coleridge's friends once objected to prejudicing the minds of the young by selecting the things they should be taught. The philosopher-poet invited him to take a look at his garden, and took him to where a luxuriant growth of ugly and infragrant weeds spread themselves over beds and walks alike.

"You don't call that a garden!" said his friend.

"What!" said Coleridge, "would you have me prejudice the ground in favor of roses and lilies?"

Have you never noticed the same thing about the mind and the heart? Let a child be idle, and Satan will soon lead him into mischief. He must be looked after. Those things that will help to develop character must be selected for him; and hurtful things must be kept out just as industriously as the farmer cultivates the useful products of the soil, but wages continual war on weeds and all unwholesome growths.

A murderer was to suffer the penalty of his crime. Speaking of his reckless career, he said:

"How could it be otherwise, when I had such bad training? I was taught to sin from my youth. When only four years old my mother poured whisky down my throat to see how I would act."

On the morning of his execution, the wretched mother bade good-bye to the son whom her influence had helped to that shameful end.

A father started for his office early one morning, after a light fall of snow. Turning, he saw his two-year-old boy endeavoring to put his tiny feet in his own footprints. The little fellow called after him, "Go on, I'se comin', papa; I'se comin' yight in ure tracks."

He caught the boy in his arms and carried him to his mother, and started again for his office.

His habit had been to stop on the way at a saloon for a glass of liquor. As he stood upon the threshold that morning he seemed to hear a sweet voice say: "Go on, I'se comin', papa, I'se comin' yight in ure tracks."

He stopped, he hesitated, he looked the future squarely in the face.

"I cannot afford to make any tracks I would be ashamed or sorry to have my boy walk in," he said decidedly, and turned away.

Father, mother, neighbor, are your tracks true? Are they straight? Can you turn to any walking behind you, and say: "Follow me, as I follow Christ"? Are you leading the little ones safe to the Great Shepherd?

The best time to sow the good seed is before Satan has scattered the tares. God has given numerous warnings and instructions to do it. "Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." "Train up a child in the way he should go." "Provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." If a farmer neglects to plant in the spring-time, he can never recover the lost opportunity; no more can you, if you neglect yours. Youth is a seed-time; and if it is allowed to pass without good seed being sowed, weeds will spring up and choke the soil. It will take bitter toil to uproot them.

An old divine said that when a good farmer sees a weed in his field he has it pulled up. If it is taken early enough, the blank is soon filled in, and the crop waves over the whole field. But if allowed to run too late, the bald patch remains. It would have been better if the weed had never been allowed to get root.

Young man, are you letting some secret sin get the mastery over you, binding you hand and foot? It is growing. Every sin grows. When I was speaking to five

thousand children in Glasgow some years ago, I took a spool of thread and said to one of the biggest boys:

"Do you believe I can bind you with that thread?"

He laughed at the idea. I wound the thread around him a few times, and he broke it with a single jerk. Then I wound the thread around and around, and by-and-by I said:

"Now get free if you can."

He couldn't move hand or foot. If you are slave to some vile habit, you must either slay that habit or it will slay you.

My friend, *what kind of seed are you sowing?* Let your mind sweep over your record for the past year. Have you been living a double life? Have you been making a profession without possessing what you profess? If there is anything you detest it is hypocrisy. Do you tell me God does not detest it also? If it is a right eye that offends, make up your mind that you will pluck it out; or if it is a right hand or a right foot, cut it off. Whatever the sin is, make up your mind that you will gain the victory over it without further delay.

What kind of seed are you sowing, my friend: good seed or bad seed? There will be a harvest, and you are bound to reap, whether you want to or not. Tell me, how do you spend your spare time? Telling vile stories, polluting the minds of others, while your own mind is also polluted? Do you read any literature that makes your thoughts impure? How do you spend the Sabbath? Boating, fishing, hunting, or on excursions? Do you think ministers are old fogies—that the Bible belongs to the dark ages? Tell me how you treat your parents, and I will tell you how your children will treat you. A man was making preparations to send his old father to the poorhouse, when his little child came up and said:

"Papa, when you are old shall I have to take you to the poorhouse?"

Do you never write home to your parents? They clothed you and educated you, and now do you spend your nights in gambling? You say to your godless companions that your father crammed religion down your throat when you were a boy. I have a great contempt for a man who says that of his father or mother. They may have made a mistake; but it was of the head, not of the heart. If a telegram were sent to them that you were down with smallpox, they would take the first train to come to you. They would willingly take the disease into their own bodies and die for you. If you scoff and sneer at your father and mother, you will have a hard harvest; you will reap in agony. It is only a question of time. There is nothing but absolute truth in the lines—

"The mills of God grind slowly,
But they grind exceeding small."

The Lord Jesus said, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

A man told me when I was last in London that England had the advantage of America in one respect. I asked how. He said:

"We have more respect for our laws in England than you in America. You do not hang half your murderers; but all our murderers are hanged if they can be proved guilty."

I said: "Neither country hangs its worst murderers. If my son wants to murder me, I would rather have him kill me outright than to take five years to do it. A young man who goes home late night after night, and when his mother remonstrates, curses her gray hairs, and kills her by inches, is the worst sort of a murderer."

That is being done all over the country. You may not be guilty of a sin as black and as foul as this: but, I tell you, every sin grows, and if you have sin in your heart

you cannot tell where it will carry you. Nothing separates a son from his mother, or a man from his wife, like sin. The grace of God binds men together; but sin tears them apart and separates them.

Come, my friend, what kind of seed are you sowing? What will the harvest be? Will it be a black harvest, or are you going to have a joyful harvest? If you think that, when you have sown tares, wheat will come up, you are greatly mistaken. If you think you can give a loose rein to your passions and lusts, and yet have eternal life, you are being deceived. For God says, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

CHOOSE CAREFULLY.

I beg of you to *choose carefully your path.* The farmer is careful in the choice of seed. He does not want bad seed or inferior seed, because he knows that such will give a poor crop. He looks for the best seed he can buy. If you choose to sow to the flesh, you will have a corrupted harvest. If you commit a sinful deed, it may bring you to a dishonored grave.

Choice is a solemn thing. You can make this moment a turning-point in your life. Once during the conquest of Peru, Pizarro's followers threatened to desert him. They gathered on the shore to embark for home. Drawing his sword, he traced a line with it in the sand from east to west. Then turning toward the south, he said:

"Friends and comrades, on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, and death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru with all its riches; here Panama and its poverty. Choose each man as becomes a brave Castilian. For my part, I go south."

So saying, he stepped across the line, and one after another his comrades followed him, and the destiny of South America was decided.

Napoleon was once offered a position as officer in the Turkish artillery. He declined it; but had he chosen to accept it, the history of Europe would have been different.

On your choice in spiritual things depends your eternity. On the one side there is Christ; on the other, the world. Between them you must choose. Do not wish to grow both wheat and tares. Oh, choose Christ! Let there be no half-heartedness Give him your whole heart. He died to redeem you from the curse of sin, and he lives to save you from the power of sin.

"No man can serve two masters." You cannot belong to two kingdoms at once. Lord Brougham grew to be so fond of Cannes that he sought to be naturalized as a Frenchman, but found it was impossible to be both a peer of England and a citizen of a French town; he must renounce the one to become the other.

Now this is where *the will* comes in. It is easy to follow other people's lead—to swim with the tide; but it requires character, moral backbone, to stand against the current of popular opinion and practice. During the late war a deserter came into the Federal lines before Pittsburg. He was asked:

"What did you go into secession for?"

His answer was: "Because they all did."

That reason will account for many a man's action. He will act according to the saying: "While you are in Rome do as Rome does"; neglecting to investigate and determine whether or not Rome does right. If the people do wrong, a man should stand against a whole nation, if need be, like another Daniel.

Bear in mind that good intentions, good resolutions, are of little value. They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Have you never seen the fruit-trees one mass of blossoms in the early summer? They give promise of a superlative yield;

but the greater number of the blossoms never amount to anything. "If religion might be judged of according to men's intentions," said Bishop Hall, "there would scarcely be any idolatry in the world." Unless the intention is carried into action, the desired harvest will not be reaped. The choice must show itself in your life.

Almighty God set two sides before the children of Israel, and I set them now before you.

Remember, as you choose, that your eternity is in the balance.

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them: I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore CHOOSE LIFE that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life and the length of thy days."

THE WEIGHT THAT HANGS ON JESUS.

ROBERTSON NICOLL.

I know whom I have believed.—2 Tim. i: 12.

Can we trust Christ? Every question of this questioning age is running up into that. If he is God, the everlasting Son of the Father; if he has overcome the sharpness of death; if all power is given to him in heaven and on earth, then we stand safe. We have not been mocked with cunningly-devised fables. If it is not so, his claims and our hopes fall in a common and irretrievable ruin. If it is so, we may thank the efforts of modern thinkers, who have beaten down old lines of defense, and stand with ourselves face to face with Jesus. He can meet the onset; he can bear the weight; he can turn men's thoughts into vanity. For his work, as the scientists and philosophers clearly perceive, is to break at every point the insufferable fixedness of law.

He, who is God, assures us of God. The demonstrations of the necessary existence of God from metaphysics are now perceived to be mere confusion. The force of the argument from design has been seriously weakened. In any case, arguments yield us nothing of the *character* of him they more or less dimly suggest. A powerful rhetorician and accomplished thinker has shown us recently the best that can be done by argument; and if there is nothing but his reasonings between us and death, the grave is at our very feet. No; the thought of educated Europe is now facing two

alternatives—God in Christ, or no God. Deny the Divine Christ, and the possibility of knowing God is destroyed, and atheism is the only ground on which a man can stand. Accept him, and he tells us plainly of the Father. Accept him, and the law of evolution has been thwarted. He is no child of Nazareth the disesteemed; he proceedeth forth and came from God. And henceforth, in spite of themselves, the scientists become students and expositors of the glory of his works.

On him hang the existence and the conquering power of goodness. The supernatural church on earth, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, is the foundation. Its members have been loosed from their sins by his death. But be it remembered that Christ alone frees us from the past. We may seek to bury it: we may say—

> "All that we two only know,
> I forgive and I forego;
> So thy face no more I meet
> In the field or in the street."

It pursues us nevertheless: and the longer the world lasts the consequences of sin are more clearly traced, insomuch that Christian preachers of the doctrine of forgiveness often timidly minimize it, and fail to show it as a really supernatural thing. It means not only renewed harmony with God: it means that the consciousness of past sin may be modified and mitigated so as to cease; that the consequences of sin will not follow us save for further sanctification in this life; that in the next life they are not found at all, according to the great and forgotten doctrine of Reversibility. In the next world, as in this, grace reigns; and the places nearest Christ are not given to those who have done or suffered most, but to them for whom they are prepared of the Father. Further, the graces of the renewed life, as Lacordaire reminds us in a beautiful passage, are supernatural, flowers growing out of Christ's tomb; fruits of a supernatural intercourse with God, established upon the work of sacrifice and substitution, taking us back to that death in which death itself was overcome. Here, too, we have the one force that does not flinch or quail before the problem of the amelioration of the world. It despairs neither of the West End nor of the East End. It believes that Christ walks through both:

> "He goes where out-door wretches walk,
> And outcasts under arches creep;
> Among them holds his simple talk.
> He lets them hear him in their sleep;
> They who his name have still denied,
> He lets them see him crucified.
>
> While standing on the palace-stone,
> He is in workhouse, brothel, jail;
> He is to play and ball-room gone,
> To hear again the beauties rail;
> With tender pity to behold
> The dead alive in pearls and gold."

Therefore, and because all power is given to him, we do not despair. Apart from him, pessimism must become the universal creed. Indeed, among agnostics it is fast becoming so; and it is impossible not to suspect that many of the efforts now made are prompted by a desire to punish the rich as much as by a desire to help the poor. The alternatives are Christianity and Pessimism. But because Jesus lives and reigns, we look and labor for his victory. What it will be we shall know when the lightnings flash from one end of heaven to the other. Meantime we may thankfully meditate

on the vast change that will have passed over all things ere the thirst of his soul is slaked.

Once more, on Jesus hangs all our hope for the future. A great change has come over thought on the subject of the immortality of the soul. There were many, almost within memory, who held fast to that, though they rejected the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. In the life of Reid, the great Scottish philosopher, there is a letter which puts this with striking force. All that is fast disappearing. Now we believe in immortality because we believe in Christ. If Jesus Christ is living, those who died in his love are living too. He lives, he loves, he is coming again. He has swallowed up death for ever. So we lay our dead to rest, and lie down in peace when our own time comes, in the expectation of the coming to this sunlit vale of tears of Jesus Christ with his holy angels, remembering the mighty word which has comforted so many humble and fearing souls: *"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."*

We might have pursued the theme, and shown that with Jesus is the ethical direction of the world; that he at last will vindicate the dark and high ways of God. But enough has been said to show that if he be what he called himself, all our hopes are sure. If not, a darkness never to lift has overspread life and thought. May we trust him, then—fully, unreservedly, joyfully? We may. St. Paul, who knew him well, committed to him everything, and was persuaded that he was able to keep it all against that day.—*From Ten-Minute Sermons.*

THE UNKNOWN GOD.

J. P. NEWMAN, D. D.

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: To the unknown God.—Acts xvii: 23.

Some truths are as old as time, and lasting as eternity. Foremost among such is the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of all things. Whatever may be the origin of the thought, the doctrine is as prevalent as the habitations of man. Whether we go to countries the most enlightened, or countries the most debased, there the idea prevails. Whether this idea is intuitional, or traditional, or rational, that is, discoverable by reason, or whether it is a matter of pure revelation, are points of dispute between us and the infidel. The question, then, is one of essential importance; but there is another of equal importance, and, I may say, of greater vitality, namely, What is God? What is his character? What are his attributes? What are his relations to man and man's relation to him? Is he our friend or our foe? If our friend, how can his love be reciprocated? If our foe, how can his wrath be appeased? If he is a being to be perpetually trusted, how may we ascertain that fact, and cultivate that trust so that it will impart to the human soul a sweet repose? How can we know him? If there is a God—and who doubts it?—if there is a Being high over all—and who can question it?—the practical and vital question is, how may

you and I, as the offspring of his power, and the objects of his regard, how may we know God, in the truest sense of that term? Know him as our father and our friend; know him as our Judge, know him as our preserver, and, finally, and above all, know him as our Savior, who will impart unto us the impulses of a new life. The text is remarkable for two things: First, for its knowledge; and secondly, for its ignorance. Its knowledge consists in this, that an altar in Athens was erected to God. The ignorance consists in this, that that altar was erected to an unknown God. As to the historic fact, that such an altar existed, I need not delay you for a moment to dispute, for Pausanias is sufficient authority on this question; and to doubt his observation touching this fact, is to doubt all the other observations of that distinguished traveler.

Then we accept the statement in the text as a fact, "As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I saw an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown God.'"

In speaking to you on this important subject, I desire to make three points: First, that God is unknown to all who have not the Bible; secondly, that he is unknown to all who do not believe in Jesus Christ; and thirdly, he is unknown to all who do not personally accept Christ as their Redeemer. There are three sources of information touching this subject—intuition, the light of nature, and the light of revelation. It becomes us, in approaching the *finale* of the subject, to ascertain or examine these three sources of information. Each theory is defended by men of renown and learning.

The question of intuition amounts to this, that the idea of God is native to the human mind; native in the sense that mind is so constructed that it operates in obedience to such laws, that whenever mind comes into existence it conceives by intuition the idea of God. In other words, that, had Adam and Eve been left to themselves, without a personal visitation from God, they would have conceived the idea of the existence of their Supreme Creator. This is the theory; this is the assertion; this is the illustration. But it seems to me there is this fatal answer to the theory of intuition, namely, that all that could have been conceived by our first parents, had they been left without a personal visitation from God, is simply this, they would have realized, nay, they would have been conscious of the fact, that there was a time when they did not exist; in other words, their existene had had a commencement; and if their existence had a commencement, the same must have been *caused*. This mode of reasoning would not have led them to the Creator, but to the relation of cause and effect; and this to a succession of causes and effects, and that succession *eternal*. So it was with the best of the Greek philosophers, who asserted the eternity of matter, out of which all things were made.

That the human mind has not innate ideas of God is illustrated in the case of Peter, the wild boy, found in the woods of Germany at the beginning of the last century.

But were this idea innate, could the unaided mind reason out the attributes of the Deity? The affirmative argument runs thus: I feel myself hemmed in, limited in the use of all my powers of mind and body. I am shut up within the finite, and realize that I am finite. Now, this sense of limitation, it is said, suggests the idea of the Infinite. My own scanty knowledge and feeble energies throw me upon the contemplation of omniscience and omnipotence, and lift me up to the great idea of a God in whom these great attributes reside.

This is what is called idealizing—the exercise of the imagination. But history is in proof, that the man who attempts to draw an ideal God, the character of that God resembles the character of the man by whom it is drawn. He is ready to love and willing to worship such a God. The idealized God of the ancient Scandinavian was "Thor, the god of battles and of plunder," and was worshiped by the Scandina-

vian warrior, who stood with a purse in one hand and a spear in the other. So with the Thugs of India, who worshiped Doorga, the goddess of vagabonds, thieves, and murderers, and who considered themselves as acting under her immediate influence. From her shrine they went to the highway, where they waylaid the traveler—whether saint or sinner, Hindoo or Mahommedan—demanded his purse, and on refusal, took his life.

So it was with the Greeks, of whom I am speaking this morning. Take the Grecian Olympus, wherein were gods and goddesses representing every human passion—revenge, envy, jealousy, and war. All the baser passions of human nature were embodied in some god or goddess. Mars was the god of war and blood, Mercury the god of thieves, Bacchus the god of drunkards. Some of their festal scenes cannot be described in a presence so refined and morally beautiful as this. The classical scholar here to-day recalls them with a shudder. Once a year, in everything that was degrading to man and degrading to woman, these terrible revels were carried on the livelong night. And the same thing is true in regard to some of the Jews, for Jehovah had to say to them: "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself." They were thieves, adulterers, and slanderers, and thought God was like themselves. This has been the weakness of mankind all through the history of the race, namely, creating a god resembling the individual man; and it is to be feared that the idealizing is characteristic of the Christian Church—that men draw their ideal of God independent of that old Book; and the god of many a Christian man and woman resembles himself or herself—in prejudices, in castes, in envies, in dispositions, and in inclinations. I tell you, my friends, it is to us a tremendous fact, that the human heart is desperately wicked, and is deceitful above all things; and the very god that you to-day bow down before is a god of your own creation. You cannot find the correspondent of your ideal in that inspired volume. Read that book, and the scales will fall from your eyes as they fell from the eyes of Saint Paul, who thought that he was doing God's service when he murdered the men and women and children that followed the Lord Jesus Christ. The individual cannot rise above his idealized god. He must change himself to raise himself to a higher plane of moral excellence. We may go further and say, that a people, having received by revelation a knowledge of God, but now destitute of that Book, may forget him, may reach a state when he will be unto them "an unknown God." This is true of the Chinese.

Now, it is a fact, and it is one of those facts which are sustained by history and by observation, that without the presence of a Divine revelation a people cannot form a correct conception of God, and cannot preserve the same without Divine aid.

The other source of information to which I alluded is a speculative philosophy. It cannot be denied that the Greeks had that. Indeed, it culminated in their palmiest days. We must remember that some of the most gigantic minds of the human race lived in the age to which I now refer. Plato had certainly some noble conceptions of God; but with those conceptions he also had errors—errors which underlie the beautiful conceptions of the Deity which he entertained. It should be remembered that the God of Moses had been known all through Greece, and all through the Roman empire; but here was a man independent of revelation, trying by his philosophical speculations to form an ideal of the character and attributes of Jehovah. What is Plato's testimony? It is this: "God, fortune, and opportunity govern all the affairs of man." And what is the statement of Seneca? It is simply this: "Evil things happen to good men, because God, the Great Artificer, could not change matter; many things were made ill by the Great Artificer, not that he wanted art, but through the stubbornness of matter."

Both Plato and Seneca taught the eternity of matter. The sublime man of the

Academy—and who is more sublime among the sons of men than old Plato?—with his splendid intellect, reaches this conclusion, namely, the eternity of matter, and that the affairs of men are governed by God, fortune, and opportunity; so that, according to this theory, divine Providence over all things is excluded. And prayer is excluded; for who would offer a prayer unto him who is a co-partner with blind fortune and inconstant opportunity?

It was in the year 54 that St. Paul landed in Athens, then the most splendid city in the world. But at that time Athens was given to idolatry. In the Athenian Olympus were included gods, superior and inferior, represented in the Agora, or the beautiful forum, that was between the Acropolis and Mars Hill. There were statues to Jupiter and Apollo, to Bacchus and Saturn, to Mars and Mercury, to Venus and Vesta, to Minerva and Diana. And these Greeks were not satisfied with embodying their ideals in statues and in altars, but they must go further, and deify their heroes, Hercules and Theseus, Cadmus and Cecrops. They must go still further, and embody abstractions, and altars were erected to Fame, to Fortune, to Energy, to Persuasion, and to Pity. It was in that Agora that Paul met the philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics. There he encountered them; there they engaged him in argument; and from there they took him to Mars Hill, that he might have a hearing before the highest tribunal of the Greeks, upon the accusation of being a "setter forth of strange gods." The seat of supreme justice was on Mars Hill, so called from the legend, that on that hill Mars had been tried, by a court of twelve gods, for the murder of a son of Neptune. The Areopagus, in the days of Paul, as it had been in the past, was regarded as the supreme and most impartial tribunal in Greece. For of that court it had been said, that, "Innocence, when summoned before it, appeared without apprehension, and the guilty, convicted and condemned, retired without a murmur." The judges sat in the open air, upon seats hewn out of the native rock. The advocates were not allowed to appeal to pity or aversion. The parties arraigned were obliged to add to their oaths the most solemn imprecations upon themselves and families, that they would tell the truth. And to deepen the solemnity of the scene, at the base of Mars Hill was the cave or temple of the infernal furies, into whose hands the culprit was committed.

Upon that hill, before that court, the friendless apostle stood. On his right hand were the honey-glades of Hymettus; on his left were the white marble quarries of Pentelicus; before him was the Acropolis, covered with shrines of Bacchus, Æsculapius, Venus, Earth, and Ceres. On the brow of the hill was the temple of "Wingless Victory;" and covering the summit of the Acropolis was the fane of Minerva, surmounted with the colossal bronze statue of the goddess, armed with spear, shield, and helmet, looking down into the very eye of the friendless apostle.

Before him were the twelve judges, one of whom was Dionysius, whose name abides in Christian history. Around him were the philosophers of the Epicureans, who denied the immortality of the soul and a future judgment; and also philosophers of the Stoics, who deified reason, and taught that a pleasure was not a good; that pain was not an evil; while among the crowd were Damaris and other Christian women, and many people that worshiped at the various shrines of Athens.

Such were the surroundings and the audience at the trial of this grand man. And now see with what skill, directness, and fidelity he declares the truth, and says: "As I passed through your city, I beheld an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown God.'" And then, taking this for his text, he proceeds at once to declare that God.

And, first of all, he announces that "God made the world, and all things therein." Those philosophers had denied the creation of matter by the Infinite; had asserted

the eternity of matter. But Paul says, "God, who made the world, and all things therein."

Nor was this enough; for he also declares his supreme and universal sovereignty in the words: "He is Lord of heaven and of earth." They had gods many, and lords many; but he would draw them from their idolatrous shrines, to that Being whose throne is on the circle of the heavens, who "binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades," and "guides Arcturus, with his sons."

Nor is this enough; but he now passes to the attributes, and declares the divine ubiquity. Waving his hand over those idol shrines that came within his view, he said: "But he dwelleth not in temples made with hands." God is ubiquitous, and is not confined to shrines and temples.

Then he goes on to declare that God is the preserver of all things: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." Nay, he is a benefactor: "He giveth to all life and breath, and all things."

The very Greek philosophers, who stood near him, asserted that man was not created by Jehovah, but that the Greeks were self-produced, and they denied the unity of the human race; but Paul, surveying the sons of Attica, exclaimed: "He hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the earth," thus tracing our ancestral line back to a common fountain-head.

Is this all? Nay. God is not only creator, preserver, benefactor, ubiquitous, but also the judge, of all men. O, how those hearts must have trembled, as their intellects became illuminated by the assertion, that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained." A judgment! Ah, yes! An Areopagus beyond the clouds, where One, greater than Dionysius, shall sit in judgment; where the ubiquitous One himself shall be the solemn and inexorable judge. And the apostle reached his climax in the words, "By the Man whom he hath ordained," whose resurrection was the proof of the coming judgment.

The great sermon was ended. Some mocked; others proposed another hearing; the audience dispersed. But, see! On one of those stone benches sits Dionysius. His eye rests upon Paul; his heart has been touched. He believes in Paul's God, and accepts the Lord Jesus. So, among the Grecian women is Damaris. She, too, receives the Lord—Christ. Others are in tears; they linger around Paul, as he speaks of that mysterious altar, inscribed, "To the Unknown God."

As it is true of the past, so it is true of today. There are deists in our city; there are deists in this congregation. But, young gentlemen, you who are tempted to deism, that is, to the rejection of Jesus Christ as the manifestation of God in the flesh, let me give you the testimony of the keenest mind of this century, a man who was an unbeliever like yourself; a man who has written on this subject. Let me give you his testimony touching the inability of mankind to form a conception of the character and attributes of God. I quote this from a recent work by John Stuart Mill. He says:

"The net results of the natural religion on the Divine attributes are these: A being of great but *limited* power, how or by what limited we cannot even conjecture; of great and, *perhaps,* unlimited intelligence; but, perhaps, also more *narrowly limited* than his power; who desires and pays *some* regard to the happiness of his creatures, but who seems to have *other motives* of actions which he cares *more* for; and who can hardly be supposed to have created the universe for that purpose alone. Such is the Deity whom natural religion points to, and any idea of God more captivating than this comes only from human wishes, or from the teachings of either real or imaginary revelations."

Thank you, Mr. Mill, thank you! There is the testimony of a logician, and such a logician as England may not see the like again for many a year, and a man who had given his utmost strength and attention to the investigation of this very subject: Whether human reason, unaided by revelation, is competent to discover the character and attributes, the will and the relations, of the Infinite God; and he declares it is not possible even to determine whether this God of nature is omnipotent or not, and whether he is unlimited in intelligence or not. And now we go to that old Book; we turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the manifestation of God in the flesh, "in whom dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily," whose chief mission in coming into the world was to reveal the unseen and the unknown God to us, and to concentrate in himself that God. I do not think that it derogates from this teaching today, that it is necessary for the human mind to have a concentration of the personality of the Infinite One. There was such a concentration when the rainbow was made to span the clouds. There was such a concentration when the Shekinah appeared in the Holy of Holies; and there was such a concentration when the Son of Mary came on earth—Jesus Christ, "Emmanuel, God with us." Turn away from him, philosophers, and you turn away from the greatest of teachers. Reject his revelation of the Father, and you worship the "unknown God." Refuse to accept his manifestation and you grope in darkness and stumble on the slippery rocks of unbelief.

And, lastly, inasmuch as God is unknown to those who have not the Bible, and to those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, so he is the "unknown God" to all who do not accept Christ as their personal and living Savior. Of what avail, though you believe in your creed, "that God is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders"; that he "upholdeth all things by the word of his power; that he heareth the raven when it cries; that he watcheth the sparrow when it falls?" Of what avail, though you believe in his ubiquity, in his omnipotence; that you believe he is the judge of the quick and the dead? There is something more than this. Nay; of what avail though you receive Christ, Son of the Father, the Only Begotten? Something else is necessary, brothers, that God shall no longer be the "unknown God," to you. You must know him as loving, and as being loved. You must know him as trusting, and being trusted. You must know him as sin-pardoning; know him as imparting peace to the mind, rest to the soul, beauty to life. You must know him as Enoch knew him; walking with him in the utmost friendship, hand in hand, heart responding to heart in its beautiful pulsation, eyes looking in the same direction; so you say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee"; so you can say, with the apostle, "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

The most touching and beautiful illustration of the intimacy between God and the human soul, is the relation between husband and wife. They know each other's spirits, each other's characters, each other's loves, each other's interests, each other's jealousies, each other's aspirations, as no two other beings can know each other. They know all this in the truest and most beautiful sense in the world. And this beautiful, heaven-born relation between husband and wife is the illustration of the spiritual and intimate relation between man and God. O, brothers! let him be no longer to you, the "unknown God." Today, in your family, and around your hearth-stones, there is an altar, but on that altar is the inscription, "To the Unknown God." Aye! unknown to your heart of hearts, unknown to your experience, unknown to your aspirations, unknown to your better thoughts, unknown to your interests, that reach into eternity; unknown as the sin-pardoning God, saving to the uttermost. The time of this ignorance must suffice. Go home, and erase the inscription, and write thereon, "To the known God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord." And then

walking with God, as Enoch did, you shall ascend and approach the eternal gates, which are opened wide, and enter into the palace of eternity, there to live with him forevermore.

THE SUPREME PRAYER.

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

Luke xviii: 10.

We read in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke a parable by Jesus Christ. It begins in the tenth verse: "Two men went up into the Temple to pray." We have read the whole parable. That is the subject.

"Two men went up into the Temple to pray." That is saying nothing. The men are more than men. We must descend to particulars; to qualities we must come. You see two men walking most of a mile away. They are nothing to you; they are figures on the road. You know nothing of them; you are not interested in their affairs. Now the Savior proceeds, "The one a Pharisee and the other a tax-gatherer." Now we know something about the men. A Pharisee can never be more than a Pharisee; a tax-gatherer may become a converted man. I do not limit the miracles of God to the lowest class of men. God forbid. A Pharisee does not lie beyond the miracle-working energy of God the Holy Ghost. But, speaking from a human standpoint, I have no hope of any Pharisee. What is a Pharisee? A self-contented, self-satisfied man. He obeys the Law; he observes every stipulation; he is a disciplinarian in the letter, though he may be very self-indulgent in the spirit. He is very careful about the letter; he is very careful about his public reputation. Whatever he may do in secret, he likes to stand well in the eye of public criticism. That man cannot be saved unless he shall change his mental and moral mood, not up to the point of conversion, but up to the point that sees the necessity for conversion.

It is curious how men are limited by their own qualities. If water cannot rise above its own level, neither can certain qualities of character transcend themselves. It would seem, too, as if men were born in great sections, in mile-long strata, belonging peculiarly to one another, to a class, to a kind, species, quality, of manhood, and they cannot rise above it. They all think alike; then all speak alike; they all look alike; they all direct their lives by the same little book which they carry with them in order that they may know what to do at every stroke of the clock. They are Pharisees, proper persons, men who are righteous in their own eyes, men therefore who by so much feel themselves entitled to despise others. They cannot be converted in that mood. There will have to be an initial miracle performed upon such men before they can begin to consider the great question of conversion. If any man has come into this house all wisdom, he will not be profited by anything; he will feel that he stands upon a great crag, and looks down upon the whole of us with a species of mild contempt. But if any man has come in here saying, "Teach me; give me some hint, some gleam of light, some word of direction," he will find it; he will find it in the hymn, or in the read scripture, or in the pleading prayer, or in the word of

exposition. He will find it. God never disappoints the earnest and steadfast purpose of man, supposing that purpose to be one of humble and intense desire to know what is right and to follow what is good.

Now this tax-gatherer was not good simply on the ground that he was a collector of taxes. A man's trade makes him neither good nor bad. A man is not necessarily a saint because he has twelve shillings a week, nor is a man necessarily a saint because he has a thousand pounds a week. These great moral estimates and standards of character have nothing whatever to do with these little, transitory, insignificant circumstances. You are what you are in the soul. This man's soul is shown. It is the purpose of the Savior to reveal a man's soul. The Savior said in effect, "This man has been brought to the point of self-abhorrence." He dare not look to heaven; he dare not look at man or woman or child or unplucked flower that yet retains its radiance, its right to be accounted a member of the paradise of God; he dare not look at anything beautiful. The sound of music hurts him, because he feels that he is a trespasser and has no right whatever in the sanctuary of holy things. So he gropes for mercy. "Can I be pitied? May I receive the mercy of God?" He will take all heaven with him; God will crowd him with riches; he will be loaded with the treasures of grace. Why? Because he began at the right point. He began at the point of necessity, conscious self-necessity; he needed something. And what did the other man ask for? Nothing but a hearing. What did the publican ask for? God's greatest gift. When is God most God? When he is merciful. When is Omnipotence most omnipotent? When it cries; when it weeps; when it comes near the city and weeps over it, and says, "Oh, city, city, how often, how often, would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood under her wing, and ye would not." That is Omnipotence at its best. "Power belongeth unto God; unto thee also, O Lord, belongeth mercy." Power in the hand of mercy is the very image and likeness of God.

So then we have two characters. They are contrasts; they enlighten or illuminate one another. Taking either by itself, it is incomplete; taking the characters contrastively, they are pregnant with suggestion, and we will study them with some profit.

"Two men went up to the Temple to pray." Very good. So far they are alike. How seldom does criticism follow the men until they take departure one from the other. "I am certain I saw the Pharisee go up to the Temple." "You did?" "Yes." "Then he is a church-goer?" "Yes, he is." "I am absolutely sure I saw the publican crouch under the door of the church as if he would crawl up to the altar." "Yes, he is a church-goer also." "Then there are two church-goers in the town?" "Yes, there are." Are you sure? Did the Pharisee really go? "Church"—what do you mean by "church"? Not the building; that is only the initial definition of "church." Did the Pharisee really go to church? Did the Pharisee really pray? Not a word. No Pharisee can pray. Men cannot rise higher than their own character. What had this Pharisee been talking about all the week? His prayer. He never got beyond this; he never lived outside of it.

And here is the philosophy of human nature. A man who is selfish all the week must be selfish when he comes to pray. He cannot get out of it. You cannot leave your selfishness outside the church door, and then begin to pray in the right key and tone. It cannot be done. What is self-indulgence? What is self-gratification? Why, it is this. Listen to this Pharisee. We will join him on Sunday morning and company with him until church-going time. "There is none like me. I fill everything up. I have attended to all these things. I have had two fastings; I could have fasted twice more. It is nothing to me. I live an irreproachable life. I am the gentleman of the parish: I am the best man that I know of in these districts. I take

care of myself; I am very anxious about my own reputation; I never do anything imprudent. In fact, I do not know a man of equal years and equal stature who can compare with me for a moment." So he chatters till the time of the ringing of the church bell. Now he goes to church, as we say, drawing upon our imagination rather than considering the spiritual reality of the case. Now listen to him. Can that man change his chatter? No. Can a man rise from that dust and take heed of God? He cannot. And you cannot be chattering about your commercial bargains, and clevernesses, and intakings of simplicity and ignorance, to throw off your apron and come into church to begin to pray. Oh, sirs, London men or provincial, you cannot do it. He who does not pray all the week cannot pray on Sunday.

But the Pharisee used religious words? Certainly. Nothing cheaper; nothing easier. What did he say? Let us listen if there be any music in it. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all I possess." I—I—I—I—I—oh, that prayer has not wing enough to get to the ceiling; how can it fly to heaven?

Yet this is a fundamental point: that a man is on Sunday what he has been all the week; and if you have been overreaching people, or overdriving people, or underserving people, or running away before the clock has struck twelve and returning a quarter of an hour after the clock has struck one, and if you have been playing the little thief all the time in this way, sir, you cannot sing; you cannot pray. You can have a hymn-book; yes, you can join in the general public utterances of praise. Yes, in a mechanical way, even perhaps in a professional way, but you do not sing. We are to sing with the heart, and the mind, and the understanding, and such singing only gets to heaven.

Why, that mows down many a great congregation! So it does. It is a tremendous scythe. It cuts down pulpits and pews ruthlessly! So it does. But we had better have the reality, we had better come to reality, quality, sincerity, and definiteness, than mislead and bewilder ourselves by merely numerical successes. He only can pray on the Sabbath who prays without ceasing, not the long wordy prayer, but the heart-cry, the sigh without words, the look that has no syllables in it, the desire that never passes the lips, yet finds its way to God. Then when the time of the opening of the mouth comes behold the tender utterance, listen to the noble adoration, and hearken to the tender song.

It is important to remember this simply because a number of men undertake to discuss the question of prayer who have never prayed; and men who cannot pray yet undertake to write articles about prayer, and they want to put up competitive institutions, say that one shall pray and the other shall not pray, and they want to subject the kingdom of heaven to tests of this kind. They make little crucibles of their own, and say, "Here the question must be tested." Now all this is swept out of the way by the inclusive and dominating consideration that unless a man pray without ceasing—I do not say with words, but pray desiringly, yearningly, after God, and incessantly—he simply cannot discuss the question of prayer. It is impudence on his part to enter into any discussion of such a question. He has no status in that court. You say a flower has fragrance; I deny it. You call for my proofs; I say, "Here they are: I have weighed the flower; it is one ounce in weight; I have walked round the flower; I have looked at the flower through a microscope; I have held the flower to my ear—it has no fragrance." Are you satisfied with the proofs? No; you smile at them: you tell me with true wit and pertinence that I have not applied the right sense to the flower. Now I take it and bring it into contact with what you term the olfactory nerve. Ah yes, certainly; ah yes. The eye could not detect it; the hand could not find it; the scales could not measure it; the ear could not hear it: the microscope could not reveal it; but—oh, ah, why, it is full of sweet-

ness! Its odor reaches the brain, and the heart, and the life. And are there fields of such flowers and gardens of such flowers? Oh, take me to them; I will live amongst them: this is the breath of sacrament.

Now until you apply the right sense to prayer you cannot discuss it; you can make nothing of it. It is like weighing the flower to find if it is fragrant. The necessity must be this: "'Oh that I knew where I might find him!' I am alone; I am sad to broken-heartedness; I have lost one of the ten pieces of silver with which I started life. Oh, these wearyings of the soul! There must be some comforting personality; there must be something out of and beyond myself. Tell me, what is it?" Now you will not be long in finding God, because you feel your need of something, some one, some help, some light. You are not satisfied with yourself; you go out of yourself to find whatever may be, secret force, poetry, conservation of energy—whatever may be termed God, Father, Mother, Savior; you will come back with sheaves rejoicing.

Oh, this cry for mercy! Did I not venture to say the other day in conducting my lesson amongst you, this is really the supreme prayer as between man and man? Think of it for a moment. I would you could all feel its pathos as I have felt it and be broken down by it. A man says to you, "Have mercy!" Why, that should break your heart. Can I have mercy? Can I be merciful? I have told him that I must turn him out of his little house if he cannot pay that rent on Tuesday morning by ten o'clock, and he says, "Pity me!" My God, I will, I must, because I need to be pitied myself! When a man says to you, "Have mercy!" he pays the greatest tribute to your majesty and your Divinity of image. Oh, do hear him! And when your little child says to you, "Have mercy!" then spare him. When the wife, or the husband, or the friend, or the client says, "Have mercy!" you will never be so Godlike as when you say, "For Christ's sake, I will." And you know that the rent will be paid, that the difficulty will be overcome, and you will never have had so much money in the bank in your life as you will have at that very moment, if you once, by the power of the cross, get over that selfish difficulty or that particular pressure, whatever it may be—I would not denominate it always by harsh names—when you say to him, brother of the earth who begs your pity, when you say to him, "I will! I will! I will!" There will come into your throat a great lump, as the Queen said once on hearing a prayer for her children; there will come into your heart a great stream of love, and you will say, "All the stars are mine, and the earth rolls round its axis and round the sun for my amusement." You will never be so near heaven until you pass through the gates of pearl and see the white throne in all its beauty.

The publican said this to God: "God be merciful to me a sinner," and went down to his house justified, rectified, made right, straight, lifted up into companionship with God. And the word "mercy" here is so pregnant in the original term. It relates to sacrifice, and to the cross, and to all the mystery which we find culminating in the priesthood of Christ. It is not the exercise of a sentiment only, but the development and final expression of a gracious and sovereign law.

Now that is how we stand. So then prayer has become a new thing to us. You cannot read a prayer with any effect unless you read it with your heart. If you take what another man has written, you must pass it through your heart and soul and say, "Now these words are mine in their meaning, not in their letters."

What a short prayer it is!—"God be merciful to me a sinner." A self-prayer: "to me." A human prayer: "a sinner." A Divine prayer: "be merciful." Why you and I might say that tonight and go to our houses justified. Now let us try to say it. Lord, teach us how to pray! And he says to us, as to little children, "Kneel down, feel that you need forgiveness, and say after me, 'God—be—merciful—to—me

—a—sinner.'" Prayer is not, "God be merciful to all sinners." There is a time for that prayer, the great public cry. But I am now speaking of personal prayer, a private, solitary interview with God, even though it be in the public temple. A man may be alone in a crowd, isolated in a congregation.

Speaking of personal prayer, there is another instance a little further on in which I read—in the third chapter of the Acts—Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer. Two men, one man, both alike, both Christ-loving, Christ-seeking, Christ-adoring, Christ-serving. But what did they do on the road? Just what I have been trying to persuade myself and yourselves to do. What did they do on the road? They answered a brother's prayer. That is the way to get God interested in our prayers. The lame man said, "Give me an alms"; then Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." The man who answers the little prayer that he can answer need not despair when he goes further into the temple and says to God, "Have mercy upon me." This is the philosophy of Christian life. Said Christ, "You cannot pray until you have forgiven." "But, Lord, I think I can pray long resounding words and still retain my hate to my enemy." "No," he says; "you can use all the words, but you cannot pray: neither will your heavenly Father hear and forgive you unless ye forgive men their trespasses."

Now I address us all, pulpit and pew, as a common man, and say, Sirs, have we answered prayers on our own behalf? Have we paved the way to the temple by deeds of beneficence and kindness? Have we said in our hearts, "Yes, I will write that letter tomorrow and forgive that man?" Have we said, "Yes, I shall begin now to love every little child; I will; I will. If a man asks anything of me that I have and can give him, he shall have it?" Why, if you go to the temple in that way, you have only to ask, and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Heaven waits to repay your human love. But, sir, you never helped a human creature in your life. How can you ask God to love you? Oh, be not guilty of that blasphemy! Mercy brings us to the cross, to the sacrifice, to the precious blood. Oh, then hear this Gospel. Give it housing in your hearts, and say, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." And the great King tarries at the cross to be merciful to the chief of sinners.—Preached in the City Temple, London, June 5, 1892.

"THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS."

MARK GUY PEARSE.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.—Phil. iii: 10.

The fellowship of suffering—is not that the deepest, strongest, closest fellowship in the world? Hearts are made one indeed when they are thrust into the fiery furnace of a common affliction and welded by the blows of the same sorrows. Have you noticed in the life of the Lord Jesus how touchingly he sought this fellowship? He himself brought heaven near to earth, and taught us that there was joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. He himself gratefully accepted their ministry and service. But for fellowship in his sufferings he turned not to the angels who, it may be, have never suffered and never sorrowed, but to us men and women. Human hearts alone could understand and answer to his sorrow. It is a thought that might turn grief into more than gold and tears to pearls, that these things do enrich us with God-like sympathy and pity. Upon the mountain-top it was Moses and Elijah that came down from heaven to talk to him of the decease that he should accomplish at Jerusalem. And in Gethsemane, where in his agony he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, although the angel appeared from heaven strengthening him, yet it was to his disciples he turned with the entreaty, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" And though he is risen and entered into his glory, yet St. Paul cries passionately that he counts all things but loss that he may know Christ and the power of his resurrection *and the fellowship of his sufferings.* Well, then, may this be our purpose and desire—to know the fellowship of his sufferings.

There is a fellowship of his sufferings which is secret and personal. That must indeed be ours if we would be his. The cross of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, because it is the power of God unto repentance. In the cross of Jesus Christ I see my sins as God sees them. The Cross is the awful revelation of what sin is. Into that white light which beats upon the cross let us bring the sins of our life of which we have made so little—the harshness, the hasty and the unkind judgment, the foul desire, the pride, the covetousness—bring them hither, the things undone, the things ill-done, things so easily excused, so lightly forgotten. "Lift up your eyes all ye that pass by, and see if there were ever sorrow like unto His sorrow." "Is it nothing—nothing—that thou, my Lord, shouldst be laden with accursed shame; that thou shouldst be crowned with thorns; that against thee should gather the multitude to mock thee with foul taunts? Is it nothing—nothing—that thou shouldst hang deserted, forsaken, accursed?" Oh, is it not everything—everything—when I do see that my sins have done it all? Surely he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The evil that my thoughts and heart have wrought have plaited that cruel crown of thorns. It is as if my hands had driven in those nails, and I had thrust the spear. My carelessness and folly have seemed to cry, "Away with him," my sin has scourged and stricken and crucified my Lord. Oh, ye that love the Lord, hate evil. Hate it. At that sight let us burn with the white heat

of indignation. Surely that cross of Christ must make our sin so cruel, so dreadful that we would sooner die than grieve him again. Let our hearts commune with him, for fellowship is more than hearing and thinking: it is to speak from the heart to him, and for the heart to hear him speak to us. "My Lord, can these lips speak any more unkindly since my very words are as the thorns and nails to thee?" That cry, "I thirst," must check the hasty word and choke the harsh utterance. My Lord, my Lord, shall I for whom thou hast died find room in my heart for thy murderers? Thy hands nailed for me upon the cross, do bind my hands from all that is foul and dishonest: thy feet do seem to hold my feet from evil ways: thy broken heart is the measure and meaning of my sin. Let my heart break, my Lord, sooner than I should go forth to forget thy love and lightly to hurt and grieve thee again.

So let us enter into the fellowship of his sufferings on our side. "My Lord, my Lord, I do loathe the ills that have cost thee so much. I am stricken and smitten with thy shame. Lift me up, that I may be crucified with thee. Thy love doth demand the utter and complete surrender of myself to thee."

And let us think tenderly and adoringly what this fellowship of his sufferings means to the dear Master. It is his solace and satisfaction. Then doth he see of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. It is good that we can heal those wounds of Calvary, and turn the cross into a very throne of grace, and the rugged nails into a golden sceptre that we do touch and live. Come, let us speak to him. "Most blessed Lord, we fain would know in all the world of history and all the deeds of men what joy were of all to thee the very sweetest. We long to know what should fill the cup of gladness to very overflowing with the richest wine that earth or heaven can give. We fain would bring it to thee." I venture to think the gracious Master should say that this is earth's and heaven's best, to come into a world of sin, and to be able to deliver it from its curse, and yet to lead men to repentance. To forgive, and yet to fill the soul with the hatred of the offense. To speak the pardon, and yet to make men hate sin more by being pardoned than any penalty and any suffering could do. This surely is the triumph of God's wisdom and God's love. It is his joy fulfilled in the very fellowship of his sufferings.

This fellowship of his sufferings must compel the utter and complete surrender of ourselves to him, that we may be conformed to his death. As if our hands and feet and all the life were given to him as he was given up for us. During the hallowed quiet of this day let there be afresh and with all the heart a definite act of surrender. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." These words can never be spoken with such appeal and entreaty as in sight of the cross of Christ.

And this fellowship of his sufferings must pass into praise. The Lord is never fully my salvation until he becomes my song. His joy is never full until our joy in him is full. Let us during this day muse upon this great love until the fire kindle. *He loved me and gave himself for me.* Think from what a height he came. Think, my soul, for thee to what a depth he stooped. Think of thy great salvation in him —the past that is buried, never to be remembered against thee forever. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Think of that great love of his as filling all the future with unspeakable blessedness. "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." By the height and depth and length and breadth of thy love let our souls be moved to a very hallelujah chorus—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who forgiveth all thine iniquities."

The fellowship of his sufferings must pass into strength to endure. There are

some who have much petty persecution for Christ's sake. All the more hard to endure perhaps because it is so little. Scorn and taunt that you do not go in the way of others. The motives are misinterpreted: you are cut off from friendships that otherwise you could enjoy but for Christ's sake. Perhaps in business there is a loss because you are not ready to do as you are told everybody else does. Well, dear souls, find today fresh strength for endurance in the cross. Like the disciples when they had been beaten by the council, go forth rejoicing that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. This is the opportunity of knowing Christ as you could not otherwise know him. And this is the opportunity of showing your love to him. Does not love dream of all kind of perils besetting its beloved that it may prove how resolute and how mighty it is? My brother, my sister, God knows how strong the current is that runs against you; how hard it is sometimes to fight the foes without and the traitors within. Today draw near and take again the oath of service. By that cross of Christ, by the shame and curse of Calvary, pledge yourself to be his faithful soldier and servant. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

And, lastly, this fellowship of his sufferings should be to us an inspiration for service. The king of heaven hath bent in pity over us, not scorning us, not condemning us, but taking upon himself our curse that he might bear it in his own body on the tree. My brother, if we call him Lord and Savior, are we not bound to be like him? Pity, deep yearning pity, for men and women must fill the heart. Help, eager help, that holds nothing but its own righteousness too much to part with, that he may uplift men. Surely now we need not despair of any since he has saved us. With a new love and a new eagerness for service must we go forth since he laid down his life for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION.

WILLIAM MORLEY PUNSHON.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.—Hebrews ii: 14.

Some eighteen hundred years ago, in the land of Judea, a strange restlessness had come upon the public mind. If a stranger, just about that time, had visited the holy city, and had made himself acquainted with the inner life of its inhabitants, he would have found them all engrossed with one absorbing theme. It had superseded, as a matter of interest, commerce and conquest and the intrigues of faction and the concerns of ordinary politics. It had become the unconfessed hope of matrons and the deep study of earnest men; and so thoroughly had it spread that it became identified with every thinking of the Hebrew mind and with every beating of the Hebrew heart. This subject was the advent of a deliverer who had been promised by God unto their fathers. In their holy books there were circumstantial accounts as to the

signs of his coming, and as to the period at which he might be expected to appear; and these various prophecies converged to their fulfillment. There had been rumors of certain meteoric appearances, which, in Eastern countries, were deemed the luminous heralds of the birth of a great king; and the pulse of many a patriot Jew would throb more quickly, as, in his vain dream of material empire, he saw the Messiah in vision already riding upon the necks of his enemies and his followers flushed with the spoil. In the midst of this national expectancy, events of strange significance were occurring in a quarter from which the eyes of the world would have turned heedlessly or in scorn. The national census was decreed to be taken through all the provinces of the Roman empire, in the time of Cæsar Augustus. In obedience to the imperial mandate, each one went up for enrollment to his own—that is, his ancestral city. The influx of strangers had crowded the little inn in the little town of Bethlehem, so that the outbuildings were laid under tribute to furnish shelter to later comers. In the stable of that mean hostelry a young child was born. There was nothing about him to distinguish him from the ordinary offspring of Jewish mothers, but at the moment of his birth a song from angel harps and voices rang through the plains of Bethlehem and ravished the watchful shepherds with snatches of celestial music. Small space had passed e'er the wondering peasants beheld a star of unusual brilliancy hovering over that obscure dwelling. By and by the inn was thrown into commotion by the arrival of a company of strangers from afar, swarthy and richly appareled, who brought gifts and spices and presented them and bowed their knees in homage before the new-born babe as before a royal child.

Rapidly flew the glad tidings from lip to lip, and passed from one to another until the city was full of it—received by haughty Pharisee with scoffs and derision, hailed with devout gladness by the faithful few who watched for the consolation of Israel—startling all the masses of the people—shaking the vassal monarch on his throne, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord."

Dear friends, it is ours in this day to rejoice in the blessing which on that day descended on mankind. Blindness, indeed, hath happened unto Israel, so that they see not the glorious vision; but the advent of the Savior is the chiefest joy of multitudes who once struggled like ourselves on earth and who now triumph through his grace in heaven, and multitudes more—believers in his true humanity and happy in their brotherhood with Emmanuel, thank God for the unspeakable gift, and that "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

The one thought of the text and that to which I want to confine myself for a few moments tonight, is our Savior's assumption of humanity; and I want just to present it in a few of the aspects in which it will be most easy for us to understand.

In the first place, perhaps, it will be necessary for us to remark that it was a condescending assumption of humanity. It is obviously impossible that the language in which the apostle here refers to Christ could have been used legitimately of anybody possessing essentially the nature of flesh and blood. The words as applied to any mere man, even the holiest, even the most heroic, are impertinent and without meaning.

There is necessarily implied the fact of pre-existence, and of pre-existence in a nature other and higher than that which he assumed. In a subsequent verse the implication is further made that this pre-existence was in a nature other and higher than the angelic, for we are told that, in his descent from the highest to recover and to save, "He took not hold on angels." That is the way in which it should be rendered, "He took not hold on angels," but they perish without redemption, without hope, "but he took hold upon the seed of Abraham." In the previous chapter, the apostle largely illustrates our Savior's essential superiority over angels. "And when he

bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith: And let all the angels of God worship him." Just as when a crown prince, you know, starts upon his travels into a distant country, the choicest of the nobility are designated to be his attendants and to follow in his train, so "when he bringeth his first begotten into the world"—a strange land to him—he saith: "Let all the angels of God, all the principalities and powers in heavenly places wait upon, worship, serve, attend him." Again he says, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire; but unto the Son he saith: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever—a sceptre of righteousness is a sceptre of thy kingdom." From these passages and others of similar tenor, whose name is almost legion, we are swift to conclude and we are bold to affirm the proper and originated Godhead of the Savior. It was God made man for man to die. Yes, brethren, that stoop of illimitable graciousness was from the highest to the lowest. In mysterious union with the child-heart of that unconscious babe, the veiled divinity slumbered. That weary and hungering traveler upon the journey of life—it was Jehovah's fellow! That sufferer, agonized but uncomplaining, who has just bowed his head to drink in meek submission the cup which his Father has given him—it is the true God and eternal life. Strange marriage between the finite and Infinite! Incomprehensible union between divinity and clay! There are those scoffers in the world, I know, who dismiss the doctrine of the incarnation as the figment of fancy, or as the dream of fanaticism, some who try everything by the standard of their own perceptions and invest their own reason—at best of no great tallness, and which prejudice has dwarfed into still smaller stature,—with absolute dictatorship over the world of mind. They profess to tell us that they disbelieve the fact of the incarnation, simply—stripped of all the pseudo-philosophic words with which they veil their unbelief, because they do not understand it. Meanwhile they live in a mysterious world. Nature has her thousand secrets which their art has no skill to unravel in the daily concerns of life, in the blessings Providence pours forth ungrudgingly. They take their churlish share in blessings whose wherefore they do not understand. They are themselves a mystery, perhaps greater than all. They cannot understand, any one of them, how that strange and subtle organism which they call "man" comes into being—how that strange and subtle principle which they call "life" floods them every moment with rapture; and yet, with marvelous inconsistency, credulous on matters where no mystery might have been expected to abide, they are skeptical on matters where mystery exists of necessity, and where the absence of it would have been a suspicious sign. "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou discover the Almighty to perfection?"

The incarnation of Christ is a mystery. We grant it—an inexplicable and a solemn mystery. Would there be no mystery, on the other hand, think you, in the event of its denial? Let us see. There is an individual obscurely born, reared in village humbleness, looked on by his kindred according to the flesh with coldness if not with dislike, with no influential connections, with no noble patronage, bold in his reproof of sin, austere in his mode of living, telling, with a strange candor, all to whom he ministered that he required absolute service, that he had no preferments in his gift, that he had no bribes to win the allegiance of the sordid, that it was more than likely that if they followed him they must part with everything else; they must separate from all that was endearing; they must be cut off from ecclesiastical privilege; they must be traduced by slander; they must be haunted by persecution; nay, they must be ready for martyrdom because they who killed them would think in their blindness that they were doing God service. Well, now, look at that individual. In spite of all these disadvantages, and in spite of all his honesty, by the mere charm of his teaching and of his life he gathers a multitude of followers. He charms the fisher from the lake; he charms the soldier from the standard; he charms the publican

from the receipt of custom; and not only these who might be supposed, perhaps, to risk little by the venture; but he charms the physician from his practice; he charms the ruler from his pride; he charms the scholarly student from the feet of his master. The chief authorities conspire against him, but his doctrine spreads. He is attainted as a criminal, but his name is held dearer than ever. His death gratifies his bloodthirsty and relentless foes; but his disciples rally, and his cause lives on. His tomb is jealously guarded and hermetically sealed, but it is somehow found empty, notwithstanding; and he has established an empire in the hearts of thousands upon thousands for which they are at any time ready to die, and which promises to be as permanent as time. And you ask me to believe that all that could have been accomplished by a mere man like ourselves! Would not that be a mystery, think you, than all other mysteries deeper and more marvelous far? Well, again, look on that individual. During his lifetime, on the testimony of unquestionable witnesses, he exerted miraculous power. He has power over the elements, for the winds are still at his command, and the lawless sea obeys him. He has power over inorganic matter and over vegetable life, for he blasts the fig-tree by a syllable, and five loaves and two fishes swell up at his command into a royal banquet for five thousand men. He has power over ferocious passion, for at his word—at his look, indeed—the soldiery lose their malignity, and the foul demoniac is comely as a child. He has power over sickness, for the numbed limbs of the paralytic quicken as he steps into the strength of manhood, and the leprosy scales off from its victim and he is ready for the fellowships of men. He has power indeed, over death, for by him the maiden rises from her shroud, and the young man greets his mother on the way to burial, and weeping sisters grasp their ransomed brother, a four days' dweller in the tomb. And you ask me to believe that all this can have been accomplished by a mere man like ourselves! "Oh," but they say, "he was a good man we acknowledge, a model man, a great teacher, a representative man, the highest man. In some sense, indeed, he may be said to have had an inferior and derived divinity. No wonder, therefore, that he should thus exert influence and thus extend a dominion." No, pardon me, but this only deepens the mystery, for this model man who held no compromise with evil, who frowned away dissimulation from his presence, of whose inimitable morals Rousseau, no friend of his, said that if the life and death of Socrates were those of an angel, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God; this model man professed all his life to be divine, received divine honors without rebuking the offerers, insisted upon his profession of divinity so strongly that the Jews stoned him for blasphemy, never failed to say that he was one with the Father, and that he should, by and by, come again in the clouds of heaven. Oh, Jesus Christ cannot simply be a good and a benevolent man. There are only two alternatives possible: He is an impostor or a God.

Now, unbeliever, you who scout the mystery of our faith, you who dismiss it as the figment of fancy or the dream of fanaticism, solve this mystery of your own. Pass through life disowning all the truths and doctrines in which we glory, but shut up—shut up as I shut you up tonight—to this far deeper mystery, either on the one hand of a good man who has spoken falsehood, or, on the other hand, of an impostor who cheated a world, while we, from the lowest dust into which gratitude can sink, will lift up our hearts and our voices, and say, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

That is the first thought—that it is a condescending incarnation.

Well, then, following upon that in the second place, the assumption of humanity was voluntary. This, indeed, follows inevitably from the foregone conclusion of his divinity. Being God, of course, he was under the pressure of no external obligation. To accommodate theological language to human infirmity, God is sometimes represented as influenced by outward things; but really every divine act is self-

contained and self-originating. Christ, therefore, could be under the pressure of no possible obligation. Law was himself in spoken precept. Justice was himself engraven on the universe. Mercy was himself—the radiation from the light of his own beneficent countenance upon the creatures that he had made. Every administration of physical government was his own, either in independent action or in the harmonious union of the divine trinity. It is manifest, therefore, that, so far as the divine nature was concerned, his assumption of our humanity was disinterested and voluntary. In fact, there was nothing prompting him to it but the upwelling of his own strong tenderness toward the hapless and fallen creatures that he had made. This spontaneity of the offering is necessary; and I will tell you why I dwell upon it—because it rescues the Father from the suspicion of injustice which from the other side of infidelity is very often cast upon him. But it seems as though our Savior, knowing that some blasphemers would rise up in later times to throw a slur upon his Father's tenderness, defends him by anticipation, and he says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh my life from me"—as if the thought had just struck him that there might be those who would accuse his Father of injustice—"No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again."

And beside this spontaneity, which at once redeems the act from the suspicion of injustice, remember also that it was a stoop of condescension undertaken with the object of a commensurate reward. That may seem strange to some, but the apostle understands it. "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." A world ransomed from the destroyer—a mediatorial kingdom erected upon the ruins of earth's falling thrones—a name that is above every name, honored in heaven by prostrate obedience and undying song, honored on earth by every confessing lip and every bending knee—this was the joy set before him, and for this he endured—bore bravely—the cross, and despised—looked down with infinite contempt upon—mysterious and inconceivable shame.

And, besides, that an enforced submission could not be practically or judicially available, there is that in the voluntariness of the suffering which at once exalts our confidence and enhances our affection for our surety and for our friend. We judge of the excellence of virtue in our small way by the willingness with which it is practiced, and although, as we are all under the bonds of a common obligation to obedience, we can hardly enter into a comparison, yet, unquestionably, the willingness —the infinite willingness—with which the Savior threw himself into the breach and rescued the world that was perishing is a claim upon our gratitude and devotion in no ordinary degree. Oh, let sinners, like ourselves, think of it, how, when the destinies of the world trembled in the balance, when the issue was so great, so fearful, so tremendous, that there was silence in heaven, the silence was sweetly broken by the voice from the throne, "Here am I, send me. Lo, *I* come, in the volume of the book, it is written of me, to do thy will, O God"; and in another passage, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." Now, think of what the will of God in this instance comprehended—the veiling of essential glory, the enduring the contradiction of sinners, the pangs of desertion and treachery, the bloody death upon the cross, the mysterious and terrible abandonment, for the moment, by the Father, sorrow's crown, a sorrow a thousand-fold intenser and more terrible than any other suffering. And it was through this—for your sake and mine—that the Savior intelligently volunteered to pass, that he might rescue a dying world. Oh, as we, sinners like ourselves, see him as he enters upon his work, and as he prosecutes his work without difficulty and without hindrance, or rather with difficulty and with hindrance, but with difficulty mastered and hindrance overcome, surely there is enough to excite our deepest gratitude and

our loftiest praise. When he came into the world—when, actually incarnate, he entered upon his brief ministry—it was with no reluctant step; it was in no hireling spirit. No; what said he? "My meat is to do the will"; and you remember what the will was. It comprehended all that I have said. "My meat," as necessary and as pleasant to him as his daily sustenance—"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Nay, he seems on one occasion to be altogether like a bird dashing itself against the bars of its cage for freedom, simply because the purpose of his mission tarried in its fulfillment. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened"—it was a baptism of blood, remember—"how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Thus did he think of and publish the great end of his coming.

Now, look at him, dear friends; look at him to-night. I would bring him down before you. See him in his sorrowful pilgrimage. Mark him as, one wave after another wave, the proud waters go over his soul, and then he dashes the spray and the surge away from him, and breasts them all like a strong swimmer, and goes through unto the end, trampling upon the breakers of God's anger, and treads the wine-press of his wrath alone; and then think of all your ingratitude, frailty, rebelliousness, pride; and, while you humble yourselves in the dust, come gather yourselves up to-night into a fresher consecration.

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine?"

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands the soul, the life, the all."

This is the second thought.

Now, you have heard that the incarnation of Christ—his assumption of humanity—was condescending and was voluntary. Now, I want you to look at it as complete. It was no mock assumption of humanity. The entire nature was taken on. He had a human body with all its infirmities. He had a human soul with its completeness of faculty, and with its capability of endurance—with its every capacity and with its every affection.

There were three reasons which made this complete assumption of the nature necessary. It was necessary, first, because the human was the nature which had sinned, and the human, therefore, must bear the brand of the divine displeasure. It was necessary, in the second place, that the world might have the best possible embodied manifestation of God—that in the minds of men, too gross, too carnal, to comprehend ideas that were purely spiritual, there might be the vision of the incarnate Son as the highest embodied possibility of being. And then it was necessary, in the third place, that the great want of the nations in all the ages of history might be met and complied with—of perfect pureness allied to perfect sympathy—the arm omnipotent to deliver, and behind it the heart tender and brave and sympathizing to feel. These were the three reasons that made it necessary that Christ should take our nature completely upon himself. And the real humanity of Christ is attested by abundant authentications. In every sense of the word—I am bold to declare it—in every sense of the word he was a man with men. He was born helpless as others are born. Through his early years he dwelt in obscurity at Narazeth in the house of his reputed father, and worked at his handicraft for bread. He grew as other children grow, in successive developments into maturity, and through the processes of the years developed the maturity of manhood. When in the exercise of his ministry he went out among his fellows, he sustained, as they did, the relations of mutual dependence and help. He was no breaker of existing states of things. He was no

iconoclast of even that which was faulty in the government that surrounded him. He was a loyal subject. He paid the tribute-money without murmuring, and he submitted to every ordinance of men. He was no dark ascetic—no saintly anchorite—no recluse that dwelt apart like a star. If men asked him to go to their houses, he went; and he blest the frugal board, and he poured his blessing upon the marriage festival; and he sorrowed with them when the homes of their love were invaded and the light of some loved one had been suddenly quenched in their sight. His filial affection shone conspicuously throughout the whole of his history and gleamed out, brilliant as a star, in the moment of his mysterious passion. His care for those who followed him ceased not with his own life. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." He was a man—thoroughly a man—with men. Does human nature hunger? He hungered in the plain where the delusive fig-tree grew. Does human nature thirst? He felt the pang sharply upon the cross. Is human nature wearied with excessive journeying or toil? "He sat thus on the well." Does human nature shrink and fear and quail under the pressure of apprehended trouble? Listen, as he has at once told us what to do and told us how to do it: "O my Father, if it be possible." Is not that human? "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt." Does human nature get possessed of a great terror? "He was heard in that he feared." Does human nature weep unbidden tears? Pity wrung them from him as he gazed upon the fated Jerusalem with sorrow. Real and genuine human sorrow wrung them from him at the tomb where Lazarus lay. Yes, he was a man with men. In all affection, sensibility, sympathy and everything but sin, he was a man with men. Look at him as he sustains every grace and is disfigured by no blemish of humanity—banishing sorrow from the homes, and sin from the hearts of men, with not an act which men can trace up to selfishness, and not a word which they can brand as insincere—his whole life one kindness, and then his death an atonement. Behold the divine man! The divine man! The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, the skill to make canvas speak or marble breathe, or to play upon men's hearts as upon a harp of many tunes, the glory of chivalry or of that baser chivalry that climbs to notoriety up the slopes where the trampled lie, and where the red rain drops from many a heart—what are their claims to his? Behold the divine man! Be silent, ye competitors for greatness, and let him speak alone. Erase all meaner names from thy tablets, thou applauding world, and carve this name instead. Shrine it in your loving hearts, ye who have learnt to believe in him, and who trust in his atonement for light and life beyond the grave. Let it be there deeper than all other memory of home or friend—the man—the divine man! Christ Jesus. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

Then one other thought, but it is the chief one. This assumption of humanity was condescending and voluntary and complete that it might be atoning.

The great purpose designed in the Redeemer's advent could not be accomplished but through death. This was the supreme object—the ultimate object for which he came into the world—that he might "bear our sins in his own body on the tree." There had been numerous predictions—in the seers' visions, from the prophets' lips, in the various adumbrations of typical foreshadowing—of some mighty one who should, in the end of the world, appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And this was a matter of such transcendent importance that all other purposes were rendered subservient to its achievement. He, therefore, took part of flesh and blood, not merely to furnish us with an example of unsinning obedience, although such was the illustrious holiness that beamed from his spotless life that the world had never seen the like—not merely to impress upon the world the teachings of a pure morality, although such was the spirituality of his lessons that never man spake like this man

—not merely that he might work his healing wonders even, and show to the bleared vision of the world beneficence in action, although when the ear heard him it blessed him, and although at his every footstep some sorrow vanished and some joy came in. All these, however, separably noticeable, were only collateral—incidental—to the one purpose for which he came into the world. He was born to die. These were but the flowers that he scattered here and there, right and left, on his way to the cross. Distinct, steadfast, from his very birth—more distinct and vivid through the last years of his ministry—there is the vision—the appointed goal—the cross—that to which all his struggles tended—that towards which all his actions converged—that which was the supreme and ultimate reason of his coming into the world at all—the cross. And the figure of the cross was distinctly before him, and his eye, steady, serene, unflinching, fastened always there. That is his design—to be the surety of an insolvent humanity—to be the friend of a forsaken race—to be the refuge and shelter of endangered men. All the former characteristics of his incarnation had a bearing upon this, the chief design, and were essential to its completeness and value? Do you not see how?

It was essential, first, that a being of high estate should condescend, because none other could avail. No angel had merit to spare; no man had merit at all. And, moreover, it was essential in order that the divinity might sustain the humanity under the pressure of its agonies, uniting with it to confer a plenitude of propitiatory value. Then it was necessary that that devotion should be voluntary, because there could be no availableness in exacted suffering, and it must be profoundly willing if it would be infinitely worthy. And then it was necessary that the assumption should be complete, because the human had sinned and the human must die—because as in Adam, the first federal representative of the race, all were dead, so in Adam again—another Adam, the second federal representative of the race—all might have the free gift come upon them even to justification of life. Now you see where we have gone. We have got a willing victim. We have got a willing victim of high estate. We have got a willing victim of high estate who wedded himself to the sinning nature. It only wants one thing more to meet every requirement, and that is that this willing human victim, allied mysteriously to the divine, should be without guilt, either hereditary or actual, in himself. Well, the miraculous conception—and you see how one Scripture doctrine hangs upon another—the miraculous conception provided for the first. "He was born not of blood, not of the will of man, not of the flesh, but of God;" and, standing steadfast in the midst of the gainsayers, he could say, in the midst of his spotless life, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" He was in the world, but not of the world. Like the chaste and queenly moon that shines down upon the haunts of beggars and the dens of thieves, and loses none of its brilliancy and gathers none of their foulness, so he moved about among the scum and offscouring of human society, and yet was perfectly and absolutely pure—without sin. No fault could be found in him even by the embittered Pilate. Thrice the disparted cloud gave utterance to the voice that attested his righteousness from heaven. Ay, and the baffled demons, as they slunk regretfully and remorsefully out of the shrines they had inhabited, were obliged to wring out of themselves the reluctant confession, "We know thee who thou art, the Holy One—the Holy One of God."

There, then, you see the willing victim—the human victim—the victim mysteriously allied to the divine—the victim without obligation and without taint—the divine human Savior—man's appointed Savior—God's incarnate Son.

Brethren, look at this Jesus thus incarnated for you, and as you look let your prayer rise—

"Answer thy mercy's whole design,
My God incarnated for me."

Close upon the sharp agony of Gethsemane came his arrest by the treachery of one whom he had trusted. Patiently he bears the ribaldry and insult in the dishonored judgment hall of Pilate. Wearily he treads the rugged pathway to Calvary, bearing his own cross. And now the mighty crowd is gathered upon the hill of shame; and now the cross is reared, and the nails are fastened into the quivering flesh, and amid the scoff and the slander ebbs his pure life away. The last ministering angel leaves him, for he must tread this winepress alone. Darkness gathers solemnly, and o'er mystery of mysteries!—the Father hides his face from the Beloved. Darkness deepened in the sky, and on the mind; how long the affrighted gazers knew not. Then comes a cry, sharp, piercing, agonizing, and all is silent. "It is finished. It is finished." The darkness gradually disperses; the malefactors and their companion are seen hanging upon the crosses three. The herding multitude of human beings gradually swarm off the hillside, talking eagerly and wonderingly about the events that they have witnessed. The moon rises calmly in the night sky, as if her sister sun had never set upon a scene of blood. But, oh, what a change had those few hours wrought in the destiny of the world! Brethren, in that death is the life of man. We can never fail to recognize it. God forbid that the time should come when we should ever fail to preach it. In that death is the life of man. Christ hath died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Christ hath died. Tell it to that despairing sinner—that man who is just about to seek escape from the upbraidings of an angry conscience by the terrible alternative of self-murder, that man that hath the cord about his neck, or the pistol at his throat. Go to him. Be quick! Tell him he need not die, for Christ hath died—hath died to bear his sin away.

Salvation! That is the end of it. That is the gospel—the inner kernel of the gospel under all the wrappings—salvation. Sound it out from that hillside of Calvary. Let the summits of the sister hills echo it. Sound it out from every avenue of this vast necropolis of a world. Salvation for the guilty, for the condemned, for all, for *you!*—for *you!*

Now, that is the gospel of the incarnation. My dear friends, receive it into your hearts, and may God help you to live it out, until at last you see Jesus, not on the cross, but on the throne.

WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

CHARLES H. PARKHURST, D. D.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.—Acts xvi: 31.

To any who may be in honest perplexity as to the true nature and character of Jesus Christ, a careful and searching study of the gospels will discover, beyond any possibility of mistake, what it was, at any rate, that Christ professed and pretended to be. There is nothing more clearly deducible from any extant biography of anybody anywhere, than that the man whose life is written out in four narratives at the beginning of the New Testament, at least claimed that he was the Son of God.

This in itself proves nothing, yet has very direct and significant bearings. It is indeed an exceedingly important point gained when a man settles squarely and firmly into the position of believing that Christ intended to have it understood that he was divine, in a sense unique and peculiar; in a sense that set him at a distinct remove from every other man; in such a sense that his will was God's will, his power God's power, his hatred of sin God's hatred of sin, and his love God's love. And I can not understand how any man can suppose that Christ had any other intention in the matter, provided only the records that remain to us of him be consulted by us with thoroughness, honesty, and an intense desire to get at the facts.

Evidently enough, then, if he was what he claimed to be he was the Son of God. Now if he was not the Son of God, he claimed to be, all the same; and how are you going to get *along* with those claims and explain them? It is evident at a glance that if his claims were false they can be explained only on the ground of his lunacy or his knavery. No other alternative remains. He was continually asserting that he was divine. If he was not divine, he deceived others purposely, and was a consummate liar, or he unintentionally deceived himself, and was a helpless lunatic. So that there are only three things that you and I can think of the man of the gospels, either that he was a maniac, or a villain, or the Son of God.

Now there are some statements that are in themselves an argument; and that is one of them—major and minor premise and conclusion, all packed into one clause. And I do not think that I am venturing too much in assuming that that way of putting the matter has been weighing as an argument on some of these minds during the week past. I pray God that it may have been so, and that there may be some here this morning upon whose minds divine light has broken along the lines and sentences spoken here a week ago; and that there are some here who a week ago were tangled in the meshes of honest uncertainty, who, if the question of last Sunday were put to them again, "What think ye of Christ?" would be ready to answer with all the *intellectual* strength, at least, that is in them,—I think that he is the Son of God.

To these, and to all others who have gone so far, but no farther, I come now with my text out of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ." To *think* that Christ is the Son of God is one thing; to *believe on* him in

that character is another. The first is only an affair of the mind; the second is a personal matter, and means getting into personal connection with him as the Son of God.

Now this is no fanciful discrimination between words that mean the same thing. It is using these words with exactly the same distinction that we make between them in matters that are secular. You say of a certain physician that you think he is a skillful physician. That means only that you have arrived at a cool and intelligent conviction of his medical ability. You say of another physician, "I believe in him." That means that when you are sick you go to him, and when your wife and children are sick you put them under his care. It is a more personal matter now; it is an affair now of getting into direct connection with him. You may never have gone to the trouble of thinking the difference all out, but you *feel* the difference the instant it is stated, and you know that you are using the words continually with just this distinction.

Or take another illustration. You say in regard to a certain life insurance company that you think it a good and safe company. That only means that you have examined, more or less carefully, its financial status, and have familiarized yourself in a degree with its methods of administration; in consequence of all which a clear conviction has shaped itself in your mind, that it is a good and safe company to insure in. And yet while thinking all that, you may say in regard to some other institution of insurance, "But the company that I *believe in* is, so and so." Which means not only that you think that this second company is a good and safe one in which to take out a policy, but that it is the company where you have gone and taken out *your* policy; and the man who hears you phrase yourself in that way will *infer* certainly that you stand yourself in a personal relation to the concern, and nine times out of ten he will think right.

"Believing in" or "believing on" always has wrapped in it that idea of personal relation and direct conviction. So that when Paul said to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," the matter did not stop with any opinions the jailer may have had of Christ—it *commenced* there undoubtedly, but it *stopped* only with the act of coming into direct personal connection with Christ as *his* Christ. It was with the jailer as it was with Thomas after the Resurrection. Thomas thought, and balanced, and deliberated, and finally became convinced that the man that stood before him with the nail-prints in his hands was indeed the same Christ he had walked with aforetime and seen crucified, but on the instant of the conviction his heart shot clear ahead of his conviction, and he cried out: "*My* Lord and *my* God." He commenced with thinking, which was quite right, and sound, and prudent; but when he had just reached the point of turning around and saying to Peter and the rest of them in a settled and philosophical way, "I think that this is all so, and that Christ has indeed risen," his cold mental conviction flashed forth into a hot cordial flame of intense personal faith and self-commitment, and forgetting all about Peter and the rest, he threw himself before the Lord in deep recognition, loyal devotement, and absolute surrender.

And that is why I feel always to make so much of Thomas' ejaculation as a true Christian creed. It was not a statement of what he thought *about* Christ, but of what he felt *to* him. It is so easy by comparison to think all sorts of correct things *about* Christ; to think *about* Christ that he is the Son of God; to think *about* him that he came on earth to be to us wisdom, and salvation, and authority, Prophet, Priest, and King; but it is such another thing to come to our Lord in Thomas' direct and personal way and say, "*My* Prophet, *my* Priest, *my* King!"

I can conceive of some one of you whose heart has not quite moved out into this matter yet. I can conceive of some such one thinking with all theological keenness and accuracy along the lines of Christian doctrine, accepting our creed, and even re-

peating it aloud in tones that are clear, strong, and confident—saying among other, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord." But just imagine how different a thing it would be for such an one to go quietly and stilly into his own closet, and kneeling down in the silence where only God is, to speak *to* God the same words that in the great congregation he had just spoken *about* God: "I believe in thee, O God, *my* Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and I believe in thee, O Christ, the Father's only Son, *my* Lord." Exactly at that point is the rub with so many of our dear friends. Their utterances in regard to Christ, their thinkings about him, have in them all the ring of the Scripture, and the very flavor of orthodoxy in all its refinement. But thinking about Christ with calculating and elaborate accuracy is world-wide removed from believing on him in warm attachment and loving acknowledgment.

Let me use another illustration. I want that this thing should not only be drawn in clear lines to your intellectual regard, but that it should as well be pressed close to your heart-appreciation. Supposing you are the father of a family of children, and that one of these children, more astute than the rest, draws up a document setting forth in studied and polished phrase his estimate of you in your paternal capacity. We will assume that in your relation to them you are all that a kind, and wise, and helpful father ought to be, and that they are quick to discover the discretion, tenderness, and fidelity with which you meet the obligations that the fatherly relation imposes. And accordingly, one of the older and more clever members of your family, in behalf of his younger brothers and sisters, formulates his opinions of you, and puts them down in black and white, somewhat to this effect: "We, children of so and so, believe in our father as a kind friend, and an ample provider. He daily shows himself quick to anticipate our desires, and generous and gracious to meet and answer them. We believe in him as a trustworthy counselor and teacher. His wisdom has always shown itself adequate to our ignorance, and suited to our extremest exigency. We believe in him as one that is suited to rule and direct us. We have always found that we did what was best for ourselves when we did what conformed most closely with his expressed wish." And so on. And then we will suppose that when this little creed—we might call it—has been drawn up, copies of it are distributed around among your offspring, and that they set about learning it, committing it to memory. We will suppose that notwithstanding all this trouble they are putting themselves to, they nevertheless take always good care as far as possible to keep out of your way. They are *bright* children, but they never do or say anything that leads you to suspect that they have any *heart*. They never seem sorry when you go away, and show no symptom of being glad when you come home. They never express any gratitude to you for what you do for them, but take what you give them as a matter of course. They never come to you to ask you to forgive them when they do wrong, but take it for granted that you forgive, and that this is part of what you are for. And yet all this time they are going about with those little stilted creeds in their pockets learning them as fast as ever they can, and after they have got them thoroughly committed, once a week, or such a matter, they all troop off together into some out-of-the-way room in the house, and stand up together like boys in a spelling class, and repeat their little ritual about their father being a kind friend and ample provider, and the rest, and then think that all that elaborate and artistic mummery constitutes them grateful and affectionate children. Now if you, as a father, should get on the track of such a silly bit of formulary, would it not be your prayer to God that your children would dispense with this pen-and-ink devoutness of theirs, and once in a while come right to you and print a warm kiss on your cheek, and take hold of your hand in that grasping and hearty way that means so much, and tell you, face to face and eye to eye, that they love you, and that they feel all the time how good

you are to them, and how kindly you protect them from harm, and lead them in the way that is best for them?

Well now, my friend (if you will not be offended at the saying of it), you are playing exactly the part of those little amateur liturgists, when you try to make the saying of correct things about Jesus Christ take the place of saying and feeling the same things directly to him. You have no objections to your boy's going up-stairs and reciting pretty things about you. But you have the feeling very properly that he is not much of a son unless he comes down-stairs sometimes and says filial things *to* you.

I am not making light of creeds. It is a good thing to know what we think about Jesus Christ, and to be able to state it in apt phrases, and it is a good thing for a congregation from time to time to repeat its creed together; it gives us a sense of fellowship in our faith. But our Christianity does not consist in the way in which our *minds* stand affected toward the *truth* of Christ, but in the way in which *we* stand affected toward *Christ.* The essence of the matter is the direct personal cordiality between you and him exactly as between your son and you.

But if I have not succeeded in expressing the difference between the two in a way that makes it palpable to you, and you want to have it made palpable to you, I have only to recommend what I have recommended already, that when you go home you retire to your closet, and upon your knees pray directly *to* God some of those same expressions which you find it so easy to repeat as a part of your creed *about* God, and observe the difference. *You feel* this matter of coming into direct personal relation to God. It means vastly much that a man is brought to his knees, for it means that for the time being philosophy is displaced by religion, and that God is transformed from a fact far off to a person near by. Prayer is the dividing line between philosophy and religion. Our nice thinking about the things of God is all of it philosophy up to the point of kneeling. When the Lord would convince Ananias that Saul had become converted to Christ, he said to him: "Behold, he prayeth."

I remember very well the case of a man who had hard work to give up his will to God. I said to him: "Why not kneel and ask God to help you?" "Oh! no! kneeling and asking would be to yield the whole point." He had a clear head, and was well instructed in the truths of our religion and thoroughly persuaded of them. He was willing enough to say of Christ: "He is *the* Savior;" but it was two days before he would say *to* him: "*My* Savior."

Now, by all this long variety of illustration is shown the difference between thinking that Christ is the Son of God and believing on him as the Son of God. One is a matter of the head, and in point of character, impulse, and the like leaves us just where it finds us. The other is a matter of the heart and life, and takes hold on the life everlasting. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Now, my dear friend, no human influences are going to *make* you take this step, and compel you upward from the merely doctrinal position of thinking that Christ is the Son of God, to the Christian position of believing on him *as* such, and personally loving, and living close to him and serving him as such. Even God is never going to compel you to take the step. All that I can do, or all that any teacher of God's truth can do, is to put the case in clear, firm lines directly before your eye. The matter of taking steps is your matter, not mine, not God's, but yours purely and simply.

The words of our text are not, it is true, Christ's *own* words, but we have words to exactly the same import that are his, and that are spoken by him in one form or another over and over again, so that there is no mistaking Christ's intention in the matter, as when Christ says in the third of John, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have*

everlasting life. And if you have looked with any studious carefulness at Christ's words as they are scattered through the gospel, you know that believing in him is just what it has this morning been represented as being. Everywhere Christ is seen trying to draw men right close to him, just as you try to draw your little son close to you. "Follow me," he said to one and another. "Come unto me."

He does not go around with difficult propositions for men to repeat after him. He never wrote out anything for men to swear by after he had gone. The only thing he ever wrote, so far as we know, was what he wrote on the ground while the Pharisees were waiting for him to pass judgment on the woman that was a sinner; and that we have no clew to. And there is significance in that. He wanted men to believe just simply on *him.* Paul did not write to Timothy, "I know *what* I have believed," but, "I know *whom* I have believed." And in reading Paul's life as it is sketched in the Acts, and as hints of it are afforded in his letters, the appreciative student is all the way clearly reminded how completely in Paul's experience and esteem Christianity was all summed up in having his own life possessed and mastered by the life of Christ. "For me to live is Christ." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "The life which I now live I live by faith of the Son of God." If you object that about all such language there is a great deal of heat and mysticism—no great heat or mysticism about it; only about the same that exists in the relation that you want should obtain between your child and you. You want to be inspiration to your child in his incertitude, do you not? and impulse to him in his purposelessness? and strength to make good his weakness? and wisdom to supply the defects of his understanding? You are never staggered by that sort of mysticism. Nothing would please you more than to know that the life which your little child now lives he lives by faith in you. He is no true child unless he does live in that way, and you no true Christian unless in your life you lean on Christ, and draw from him and live in him in the *same* way, believing what he says because it is he that says it, resting in his salvation because it is he that has wrought it, and doing what he bids because it is he that has commanded it; thus standing to him hourly in what our catechism excellently designates as his threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Now, dear friends, my address to you has been to one, as we assumed at the outset, who thinks that Christ is God's Son, in such a sense that what Christ commands is God's own command. Now there is nothing clearer in the gospels than that Christ calls upon you at once—to-day, now—to believe on him in exactly that way in which belief on him has been this morning represented to you; that you should cease barely thinking that he is God's Son, and that you should come to him and give up to him, and walk with him, and lean upon him, and serve him. God, then, who holds the universe in his hand, says to you this instant, "Believe on my Son." There are you, there is the command freighted with all the might and all the love of the Omnipotent Father. Dear friend, you stand this instant face to face with the God of all the worlds! Settle it now! I am an ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech you by me. I pray you in Christ's stead be you reconciled to God!

LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED—A SOUL!

JOHN ROBERTSON.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath made the iniquities of us all to meet upon him.—Isaiah liii:6.

Among our Scottish hills I have seen the sun rise in undimmed splendor. The shadows of night one by one lifted and fled before his face, and the morning became clear as crystal. Beneath you on the moor lay the track, from the beginning to the end it could be seen, and I have started across that moor journey. As the sun got higher and higher, the mists began to rise from the river in the depths of the valley. The clouds gathered in the heavens, and began to curl over the crags, and in an hour's time the path was obliterated, and in the mist I had lost my way.

Never was there such a fair morning dawned as that morning when God made man. Never was there such a clear atmosphere as there was in Eden. Never was there such promise of a beautiful day as that morning promised when the Garden was the home of those progenitors of ours. But the mists of sin and disobedience gathered and thickened, outside on the moor of desolation at last Adam and Eve—and we with them—are staggering, lost, circling round and round, but never getting nearer the home that we once saw lie straight as an arrow on the path at our feet. "Like sheep," says the Holy Ghost. Adam was the bell-wether, and whatever the bell-wether does the rest of the flock do. Go through that gap, bell-wether, and every one will follow. Jump that rence, bell-wether, and the whole of the flock will be over. Such is the nature of sheep, and such is the simile chosen by the Spirit of God to depict our natural wandering.

We are lost. We have followed the bell-wether into transgression and condemnaiton. We are all lost by nature. The mist is so thick that we cannot see our finger before us, far less the stars that are hung as lamps at the gate of heaven. Far less the face of our heavenly Father. The state of nature is the state of condemnation. We are lost. Oh, how utterly insane is spending time on the philosopher's and theologian's question of the origin of evil! How vain the hair-splitting and the speculation as to how sin entered into the world! It is here. There is the cry, "A man overboard!" Did you ever hear it? Has the lap of the vessel on the mid Atlantic kept you awake at night? We have heard the scurrying of feet on the deck. I know that that sailor who is drowning, and carried by the wave away from the vessel, never asks, "How did I descend so quickly? how was it that that rope broke in my hands? How did I slip my foot? How—how, &c." Never once asks that. All he knows is that he is drowning. Do not ask me to explain the origin of evil, or explain the personality of the devil, all I know is that I am lost. When the red flame is licking along your bedroom casement, and you realize that the house is on fire, you never ring the bell for the servant-maid to come up and explain how this fire had its origin. "Mary, would you just sit down there and tell me how this fire arose? Were you reading a novel in bed, and the candle tipped over and brought this about?" The one thing that is done is to break that glass at the corner that rings

the electric alarm in the fire-engine station, and let the yellow-topped engines rattle like fury along the street. Settle about the origin of the fire afterwards, you speculator, you hair-splitting theological expert. How was man lost? It will be time to ask that when man is saved, and got home.

Sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. It is in ruins. I happened to be in Paris not very long after the Franco-German war, and visited the Palace of Versailles. Yonder is the stone in the broken lamp. Here are the parterres of the garden trodden by the bloody feet of the Communists. With all the evidence before you that the Tuilleries have been riddled by the bullets of those rebels against authority, you do not need to ask the origin of it. So with humanity you have the evidence. It is one great testimony—palace roofless, windowless, battered by sin. There has been a terrible revolution in man's nature; there has been a terrible cataclysm somehow. "The heart of man," says the scripture, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Desolation, human depravity is scripture truth. "All we like sheep have gone astray"—high and low, titled and humble, rich and poor, old and young—we have all erred and come short of the glory of God. One thing is sure as God is in heaven and the devil in hell—lost, stolen, or strayed—a soul! That is the doctrine I find in this Book to preach. It is ruin, utter and irremediable—we are lost. The mist is thick about us, and if you think you will stumble on heaven and find the mist lift just as you are at the gate, believe me, you are mistaken. No man ever yet stumbled on heaven's road through the mist as you have stumbled on the track on the moor through the mist. There is no coming haphazard on the gate of heaven. Without the Savior there is no salvation. Oh, awful narrowness of the way to be saved! oh, unique demand of the Spirit! "Marvel not," says Jesus, "that I say unto you, ye must be born again." Every one has turned to his own way. The wilfulness of the human heart has macadamized a road according to our own making, and in our own choice, too, each of us. I will tell you *your* road, man. The taste from the public-house is hardly out of your mouth as you sit here. You had a splitting headache this morning, and the wife dare not say "cheep," you are so ill-natured; and there you sit with a face that would do credit to the archangel Gabriel. You grudge the shutting of these hell-traps on the Lord's day. The first thing you will do to-morrow morning is not to take your porridge, you have no appetite for that, but it is a "nip" or "pick-me-up" on the way to your work, at the street corner. That is proof enough that this drink is the way to which you have turned. Oh, the harm and woe and human wreckage and heart-loss by that damned drink! Within a stone's-throw of this City Hall what drink has done!—the curse of our country!—the filler of hell—the emptier of heaven! John Struthers, the Ayrshire ploughman poet, like another that sang so sweetly like a lark on a summer's morning—listen to that bacchanalian praise that, alas! came from the harmonic lips of our national bard about the drink—and John Struthers wrote a sequel to Robbie's famous drinking song "O' a' the three"—

"We are nae fou,
We're nae that verv fou."

Sang John Struthers about "the three" that met at Moffat, and thus sang, in blasphemy to God, the praise of "Scotland's skaith:

"Nae mair in learnin' Willie toils,
Nor Allan wakes the meltin' lay,
Nor Rab, wi' a' his witchin' wiles,
Beguiles the 'oor of dawnin' day.

For though they wer'na very fou,
That wicked wee drap in their e'e
Has done its wark, untimely now
The green grass waves o'er *a' the three!"*

Drunkards' graves in Scotland as thick as heather-plots on our hills! Man, if you are drinking, you are just trying to play with the edge of a dagger that has been sent by the hand of the devil to millions of hearts before yours. Drink. That is your way.

And I know yours. It is impurity. You are an unclean man. You know it. That will ruin you. That is your way.

"And waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing;
But oh, it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling."

And I know yours. It is covetousness. That is why you do not dissipate. Because your nerves would all be unstrung, and you would be unfit for the wrestle on the Stock Exchange to-morrow morning. It is covetousness. It is the making money. That is your way. The man with the muck-rake is very common. Did you ever see Sir Noel Paton's picture? The eyes of the poor muck-raker distended after the straws which he keeps raking day after day, in the foul dust in the bottom of his cell, happy when a bigger heap of the muck than ordinary lay at his feet. Oh, this muck-raking in Glasgow commercialness! Living for this world. That robs a man of soul-anxiety.

"Gold, gold, gold,
Hard and yellow, bright and cold;
Loved by the young, pursued by the old
To the very verge of the church-yard mould;
Price of many a crime untold,
Gold, gold, gold!"

That is your way. That is why you are not converted. You have too good a business. You see the main chance in life, and you are stopping your ears from the cry on the cross by the jingle of the till and the cash-bag.

I visited a dying old man. The blood that was in his veins is in mine too. He was wealthy. He had given the energy of his youth to making money, and he had made it, and eternity was just upon him. No rest for him. The shadow of that coming event was cast before on his clammy brow, and the only way that he would remain in his bed was for the pound notes that were yonder in the safe to be brought to him to let him feel their delicious crispness. Bring the cheques and let him see them. Pour the sovereigns and the silver into the bed, and let the thin clutching hands of the dying man be put through the coins, and let him listen to the sweet music of the clink and jingle before he goes. Poor soul, God's judgment has surrounded you, and if that is your way it is as utter a way for hardening the heart as dissipation and deviltry under the gas lights of this city.

Here is another way. A man says, "I am a religious man. You have no idea what I do for the Sustentation Fund of the Free Kirk. The elders, like starched sentries at the collection plate, bow their salaams as I pass, for they know it's no 'broon bawbee' that's dropped in by me! I have my name on the communion roll, and I am

respected. A pillar of the kirk—(yes, a *caterpillar,* to tell the truth!) I am religious. I am a great advocate for the spirituality of public worship. I go in for the 'schemes' of the kirk, and on the instrumental music question I am just a bulwark for the faith. 'The kist o' whistles' is blown by the devil's breath, and I wouldn't whistle nor smile on the Lord's day for worlds. I keep the 'Sawbath'—(yes, and everything else I can lay my hands on!") Bunyan knew what he was about as he showed Christian on the way up to heaven, and when he came within the shadow of the gates that cast no shadow, for they are gates of Light, he said to himself, "I will make a way to hell here, on the very threshold of heaven." Bunyan knew his Bible, and there was one man that tripped along the church road to the very gates of heaven, and he took out his "church line" and showed it. But the keeper knew him not, and he went, church certificate with him, to his place in hell. The devil has just upturned our churches and made them into huge hulls conveying passengers to hell. Take care of churchliness and a Christless Christianity and a bloodless salvation. It will do very well, that, for earth. It will help you in your business becoming a church member. In my old church at Gorbals there was a man that joined me, a Christian man. He put his prospects aside to join our poorhouse of a place, and he told me it had cost him £500 a year to be connected with Gorbals instead of a wealthy suburban flock, whose connection would be returned in "dollars and dimes." You never heard, did you? of a doctor looking round the U. P. Kirk to see if there was a doctor there—but there is one there, and then the Free Kirk—but there is one there; so he goes to the Auld Kirk, for there is no doctor there. So he says, "I will join this church"—of course, from conscientious motives! Oh dear, yes! The suburban churches are not filled from selfish, easy-osy motives like these, believe me. Get out now! better than by the pulpit preaching, better than by the praises of the people, better than by the spiritual privileges of a godly ministry, a congregation will be bound by the gold-ringness of its membership. It will do for earth, this flimsy church profession, but it will not do for heaven.

When I arrived at New York, the first thing I did was to get all my British money disposed of. Better than the American money—less of alloy, more of silver—better in the world's exchange than that of the United States is this British coin. That was not the question.

British money was not current coinage from New York to San Francisco. You cannot pass an image of Her Majesty from end to end of the Western Republic. They have their own mint, and even a Canadian dollar will not pass in the United States. The dollar, the decimal coinage of the American Republic, too, from American Canada itself will not pass. You will be checked on the tram cars, you will be checked on the railway by the Canadian dollar. "Whose image and superscription is this?" It is Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria's. Oh, but you are not under her sway here. Here it is not the Union Jack, but the Stars and Stripes. You cannot pass that image and superscription in America, and, believe me, that your religious profession may be current coin for business, but it will not do for the gate of heaven.

There is just one Image and Superscription accepted there. Examine the purse of your heart and see if you have the true Coin. It is the Image of the Crucified, it is the precious Blood of the Savior. It is the superscription of a Cross, and One on it like unto the Son of God. That is the coin for heaven. That is what will stand you in stead as the earth rolls beneath your feet, and the stars fall, as the elements melt with fervent heat. Whose image is here? It is the image of Christ, the Son of God, my Savior. "The Lord hath made the iniquities of us all to meet upon him." As the lightning rod pierces the electrically charged cloud, and brings the lightning to the earth harmless and spent, so the Cross of Jesus, piercing the wrath of the Almighty

against my sin, brings the thunder-bolts of heaven to his own dear heart, and I am free, free by the broken heart of the Christ. Have you accepted it? What is your hope for heaven? "Not of works, lest any man should boast." You may have all the silver that was ever coined from the mountains of the West, but you cannot put on it the image that will pass you into heaven. It is struck in the mint of God. You may have all the sacramental blessings of all the churches in Christendom; you may have the confirmation from the hands of a hundred bishops; you may have the benediction of ten hundred Popes of Rome, and the *Pax vobiscum* of them all is an infernal lie. It is peace by the Blood of his Cross!

It is by the Atonement of the Son of God, the meeting of our iniquities on him, the sacrifice to Divine justice for you the sinner. The salvation of the soul is by a process patented and copyrighted by the Almighty. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath made the iniquities of us all to meet upon him." Oh! dying sinner! never-dying soul! as the Savior looks in love from the transom of that cursed Tree, say unto him with your surrendered heart, "My Lord and my God."

"Nothing either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

"When he, from his lofty throne,
Stooped to do and die,
Everything was fully done:
Hearken to his cry.

"Weary, working, burdened one,
Wherefore toil you so?
Cease your doing; all was done,
Long, long ago.

"Till to Jesus' work you cling,
By a simple faith,
'Doing' is a deadly thing,
'Doing' ends in death.

"Cast your deadly 'doing' down,
Down at Jesus' feet;
Stand in him, in him alone,
Gloriously complete.

"'It is finished,' yes, indeed,
Finished every jot!
Sinner, this is all you need,
Tell me, is it not?"

The Lord hath made the iniquities of us all to meet upon him. Amen! Receive the Benediction!

CHRIST'S WAY OF DEALING WITH SIN.

FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON.

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy),—I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.—Mark ii: 8-11.

This anecdote is doubtless a familiar one to us all.

The Son of God was teaching in a house full of listeners, round which crowds were pressing. The friends of a poor palsied man desired his aid. It was scarcely possible for one person to edge his way through the press, where all longed to hear, and none of the crowd were likely to give place; but, for the cumbrous apparatus of a pallet borne by four, it was impossible. Therefore, they ascended by the outside staircase, which, in Oriental countries leads to the flat roof, which they broke up, and let their friend down in the midst, before Jesus. No doubt this must have struck every one. But the impression produced on the spectators would probably have been very different from that produced on Christ. They that saw the bed descending from the roof over the heads of all, and who had before seen the fruitless efforts that had been made to get in, and now remembered that he who had been farthest from Christ was unexpectedly in a few minutes nearest to him, could not have withheld that applause which follows a successful piece of dexterity. They would have admired the perseverance, or the ingenuity, or the inventiveness.

On none of these qualities did Christ fix as an explanation of the fact. He went deeper. He traced it to the deepest source of power that exists in the mind of man. "When Jesus saw their *faith*." For as love is deepest in the being of God, so faith is the mightiest principle in the soul of man. Let us distinguish their several essences. Love is the essence of the Deity,—that which makes it Deity. Faith is the essence of humanity, which constitutes it what it is. And, as here, it is the warring principle of this world which wins in life's battle. No wonder that it is written in scripture, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." No wonder it is said, "All things are possible to him that believeth." It is that which wrestles with difficulty, removes mountains, tramples upon impossibilities. It is this spirit which in the common affairs of life, known as a "sanguine temperament," never says impossible and never believes in failure, leads the men of the world to their most signal successes, making them believe a thing possible because they hope it; and giving substantial reality to that which before was a shadow and a dream.

It was this "substance of things hoped for" that gave America to Columbus, when billows, miles deep, rose between him and the land; and the men he commanded wellnigh rose in rebellion against the obstinacy which believed in "things not yet

seen." It was this that crowned the Mohammedan arms for seven centuries with victory; so long as they believed themselves the champions of the one God with a mission from him, they were invincible. And it is this which so often obtains for some new system of medicine the honor of a cure, when the real cause of cure is only the patient's trust in the remedies.

So it is in religion. For faith is not something heard of in theology alone, created by Christianity, but one of the commonest principles of life. He that believes a blessing is to be got, that "God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," will venture much, and will likewise win much. For, as with this palsied man, faith is inventive, ever fertile in expedients,—like our own English character, never knowing when it has been foiled; and the nearest victory at the very moment when the last chance has seemed to fail. We divide our subject into,—

I. The malady presented to Christ.

II. His treatment of it.

I. The malady, apparently, was nothing more than palsy. But not as such did Jesus treat it. The bystanders might have been surprised at the first accost of Jesus to the paralytic man. It was not, "Take up thy bed and walk"; but, Thy sins be forgiven thee." As with their faith, so it was here. He went deeper than perseverance or ingenuity. He goes deeper than the outward evil; down to *the* evil, the root of all evil, properly the only evil,—Sin. He read in that sufferer's heart a deeper wish than appeared in the outward act, the consequences of a burden worse than palsy, the longing for a rest more profound than release from pain,—the desire to be healed of guilt. It was in reply to this tacit application that the words "Thy sins be forgiven thee" were spoken.

Now, sin has a twofold set of consequences. 1. The natural consequences. 2. The moral consequences.

1. By the natural, we mean those results which come inevitably in the train of wrong-doing, by what we call the laws of nature visiting themselves on the outward condition of a sinner, by which sin and suffering are linked together. As, for example, when an intemperate man ruins his health, or an extravagant man leaves himself broken in fortune; or when tyrannical laws bring an uprising of a people against a tyrant:—these are respectively the natural penalties of wrong-doing.

Here, apparently, palsy had been the natural result of sin; for otherwise the address of Christ was out of place, and meaningless. And what we are concerned to remark is, that these natural consequences of sin are often invisible as well as inevitable. Probably not one of the four friends who bore him suspected such a connection. Possibly not even his physician. But there were two at least to whom the connection was certain,—the conscience of the palsied man himself, whose awakened memory traced back the trembling of those limbs to the acts of a youth long past; and to the all-seeing eye of Him to whom past, present, and future are but one.

And such experience, brethren, doubtless, is true much oftener than we imagine. The irritable temperament, the lost memory which men bewail, the over-sensitive brain, as if causeless,—who can tell how they stand connected with sins done long ago? For nothing here stands alone and causeless. Every man, with his strength and his weaknesses, stunted in body or dwarfed in heart, palsied in nerve or deadened in sensibility, is the exact result and aggregate of all the past,—all that has been done by himself, and all that has been done by his ancestors, remote or near. The Savior saw in this palsied man the miserable wreck of an ill-spent life.

2. Now quite distinct from these are the moral consequences of guilt: by which I mean those which tell upon the character and inward being of the man who sins. In one sense, no doubt, it is a *natural* result, inasmuch as it is by a law, regular and

unalterable, a man becomes by sin deteriorated in character, or miserable. Now these are twofold, negative and positive,—the loss of some blessing: or the accruing of some evil to the heart. Loss,—as when by sinning we lose the capacity for all higher enjoyments; for none can sin without blunting his sensibilities. He has lost the zest of a pure life, the freshness and the flood of happiness which come to every soul when it is delicate and pure and natural. This is no light loss. If any one here congratulates himself that sin has brought to him no positive misery, my brother, I pray you to remember that God's worst curse was pronounced upon the serpent tempter. Apparently it was far less than that pronounced on the woman, but really far more terrible. Not pain, not shame,—no, these are remedial, and may bring penitence at last,—but to sink the angel in the animal,—the spirit in the flesh; to be a reptile, and to eat the dust of degradation as if it were natural food. Eternity has no damnation deeper than that.

Then, again, positive,—the dark and dreadful loneliness that comes from doing wrong,—a conscious unrest which plunges into business or pleasure or society, not for the love of these things, but to hide itself from itself as Adam did in the trees of the garden, because it dare not hear the voice of God, nor believe in his presence. Do we not know something of a self-reproach and self-contempt, which alternating at times with pride almost tear the soul asunder in part. And such was the state of this man. His pains were but the counterpart and reflection of a deeper sorrow. Pain had laid him on a bed, and said to him, "Lie there face to face with God,—and think!" We pass on now to consider,—

II. Christ's treatment of that malady.

By the declaration of God's forgiveness. Brethren, if the Gospel of our Master means anything it means this,—the blotting out of sin: "To declare his righteousness in the remission of sins that are past." It is the declaration of the highest name of God,—Love. Let us understand what forgiveness is. The forgiveness of God acts upon the moral consequences of sin directly and immediately; on the natural, mediately and indirectly.

Upon the moral consequences directly. Remorse passes into penitence and love. There is no more loneliness, for God has taken up his abode there. No more self-contempt, for he whom God has forgiven learns to forgive himself. There is no more unrest, for "being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Then the fountains of the great deep are broken us, and unwonted happy tears can come,—as with the woman in the gospels. I pray you to observe that this comes directly, with no interval,—"Being justified by faith." For God's love is not an offer, but a gift;—not clogged with conditions, but free as the air we breathe.

Upon the natural consequences, not directly, but indirectly and mediately. The forgiveness of Christ did not remove the palsy; that was the result of a separate, distinct act of Christ. It is quite conceivable that it might never have been removed at all,—that he might have been forgiven, and the palsy suffered to remain. God might have dealt with him as he did in David's case:—on his repentance there came to him the declaration of God's pardon, his person was accepted, the moral consequences were removed, but the natural consequences remained. "The Lord hath put away thy sin, nevertheless the child which is born to thee shall die."

Consider, too, that without a miracle, they *must* have remained in this man's case. It is so in every-day life. If the intemperate man repents he will receive forgiveness, but will that penitence give him back the steady hand of youth? Or if the suicide between the moment of draining the poisoned cup and that of death repent of his deed, will that arrest the operation of the poison? A strong constitution or the physician may possible save life; but penitence has nothing to do with it. Say that the natural penal consequence of crime is the scaffold:—Did the pardon

given to the dying thief unnail his hands? Did Christ's forgiveness interfere with the natural consequences of his guilt?

And thus, then, we are brought to a very solemn and awful consideration,—awful because of its truth and simplicity. The consequences of past deeds remain. They have become part of the chain of the universe,—effects which now are causes, and will work and interweave themselves with the history of the world forever. You cannot undo your acts. If you have depraved another's will, and injured another's soul, it may be in the grace of God that hereafter you will be personally accepted and the consequences of your guilt inwardly done away, but your penitence cannot undo the evil you have done, and God's worst punishment may be that you may have to gaze half frantic on the ruin you have caused, on the evil you have done, which you might have left undone, but which being done, is now beyond your power forever. This is the eternity of human acts. The forgiveness of God,—the blood of Christ itself does not undo the past.

And yet even here the grace of God's forgiveness is not in vain. It cannot undo the natural consequences of sin, but it may, by his mercy, transform them into blessings. For example, suppose this man's palsy to have been left still with him, himself accepted, his soul at peace. Well, he is thenceforth a crippled man. But crippling, pain,—are these necessarily evils? Do we not say continually that sorrow and pain are God's loving discipline given to his legitimate children, to be exempt from which were no blessing, proving them to be "bastards and not sons." And why should not that palsy be such to him, though it was the result of his own fault? Once when it seemed in the light of a guilty conscience only the foretaste of coming doom,—the outward a type of the inward, every pang sending him farther from God, it was a curse. Now, when penitence and love had come, and that palsy was received with patience, meekness, why may it not be a blessing? What makes the outward events of life blessings or the reverse? Is it not all from ourselves? Did not dissolution become quite another thing by the fall,—changed into *death*; assuming thereby an entirely altered character: no longer felt as a natural blessed herald, becoming the messenger of God, summoning to higher life, but now obtaining that strange name,—the king of terrors? And in Christ, death becomes our minister again: "Ours," as St. Paul says, "with all other things." The cross of Christ has restored to death something more blessed than its original peacefulness. A sleep now: not death at all. And will not a changed heart change all things around us, and make the worst consequence of our own misdoing minister to our eternal welfare? So that God's forgiveness, assured to us in the cross of Christ, is a complete remedy for sin, acting on its natural consequences by transformation indirectly; on its moral results directly, removing them.

Lastly, let us learn from this the true aim and meaning of miracles. Let us attend to the account our Master gives us of the reason why he performed this miracle. Read verses 9, 10. To say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was easy, for no visible result could test the saying. To say, "Take up thy bed and walk," was not apparently so easy, for failure would cover with confusion. He said the last, leaving the inference,—If I can do the most difficult, then, of course, I can do the easier. Here we have the true character of a miracle; it is the outward manifestation of the power of God, in order that we may believe in the power of God in things that are invisible.

Now, contrast this with the popular view. Miracles are commonly reckoned as proofs of Christ's mission, accrediting his other truths, and making them, which would be otherwise incredible, evidently from God. I hesitate not to say that nowhere in the New Testament are they spoken of in this way. When the Pharisees asked for evidences,—and signs,—his reply was, "There shall no sign be given you." So said St Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians,—not signs, but "Christ crucified." He

had no conception of our modern notion of miracles,—things chiefly valuable because they can be collected into a portable volume of evidences to prove that God is love: that we should love one another: that he is the Father of all men. These need no proofs, they are like the sun shining by his own light.

Christ's glorious miracles were not to prove these, but that through the seen the unseen might be known; to show, as it were, by specimens, the living power which works in ordinary as well as extraordinary cases. For instance here, to show that the one who is *seen* to say with power, "Take up thy bed and walk," arresting the natural consequences of sin, is actually, though unseen, arresting its moral consequences. Or, again, that he who bade the waves be still in Galilee is holding now, at this moment, the winds in the hollow of his hand. That he who healed the sick and raised the dead, holds now and ever in his hand the issues of life and death. For the Marvelous is to show the source of the Common. Miracles were no concession to that infidel spirit which taints our modern Christianity, and which cannot believe in God's presence, except it can see him in the supernatural. Rather, they were to make us feel that all is marvelous, all wonderful, all pervaded with a divine presence, and that the simplest occurrences of life are miracles.

In conclusion. Let me address those who, like this sufferer, are in any degree conscious either of the natural or moral results of sin working in them. It is apparently a proud and a vain thing for a minister of Christ, himself tainted with sin, feeling himself, perhaps more than any one else can feel, the misery of a palsied heart, for such an one to give advice to his brother men; but it must be done, for he is but the mouthpiece of truths greater than himself, truths which are facts, whether he can feel them all or not. Therefore, if there be one among us who in the central depths of his soul is conscious of a Voice pronouncing the past accursed, the present awful, and the future terrible,—I say to him, Lose no time in disputing, as these scribes did, some church question, "whether the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins;" nor whether ecclesiastical etiquette permits you to approach God in this way or in that way,—a question as impertinent as it would have been for the palsied man to debate whether social propriety permitted him to approach the Savior as he did, instead of through the door. My Christian brethren, if the crowd of difficulties which stands between your soul and God succeeds in keeping you away, all is lost. Right into the presence you must force your way, with no concealment, baring the soul, with all its ailments, before him, asking, not the arrest of the consequences of sin, but the "cleansing of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God;" so that if you must suffer, you shall suffer as a forgiven man.

This is the time! Wait not for another opportunity nor for different means. For the saying of our Lord is ever fulfilled, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

A FRIEND AT COURT.

JOHN SUMMERFIELD.

Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.—Hebrews iv: 14.

He that thoroughly understands the *Romans* understands all the Gospel—and he who will well digest the *Hebrews* must understand the law and the Gospel.

In this book chiefly the law is employed as a schoolmaster, and is to illustrate the Gospel. Paul's great design was to confirm the Hebrews: he convinces them that they were *gainers*, not *losers*, by Christianity; proves that there was nothing under the Mosaic which is not preserved more excellent under the Gospel. The Jews boasted of Moses as a prophet and lawgiver. St. Paul shows we have one superior. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The superior dignity of our ambassador Christ Jesus shows our Gospel to be superior. The Jews boasted of Aaron: in our text he shows that in this the Gospel has the advantage: we have a *great* High-priest, far above Aaron. —(Discuss this priesthood.) Two particulars in the text.

I. The exhortation to steadfastness.

II. The motive by which it is enforced.

I. The exhortation to steadfastness.

1. By "*our profession*:" it sometimes means the subject-matter of our profession. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."—Heb. iii: 1: elsewhere, not what we profess, but the *act of professing*. "Let us hold the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised."—Heb. x., 23. Same sense here: *be* Christians, and *profess* it.

In the Christian world are two kinds of professors. *First* class: all who call themselves Christians; they, *in a sense*, make a profession. Such should hold fast *even* that. Better than a world of infidels. See the heathen world. It is something that men acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures. It is a *ground:* hold fast *there*, and act according to it.

Some may oppose us when reproved for unchristian conduct. "I make no profession of religion," say they, as if they had a right to act irreligiously.—Impudent and wicked.—Suppose one make some excuse for *social* duties, a kind parent, an honest man, etc. "Oh! I make no profession of these things:" is he the better for saying "he did not profess to love his wife," etc.: it is no excuse for not performing—shocking. —Same with those who do not profess religion.—Not profess to submit to Christ?

Who purchased them with his blood? You *ought* to make a profession; every man's duty is to be religious, and to profess it.—It is *false* and wicked, as well as impudent: all make some profession unless they are infidels; therefore, "let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Second class: those, not merely nominal, who have received the grace of God in truth, and not backward at times to give a reason of their hope. Such were the Hebrews here addressed, "Let us, therefore, fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

Three particulars distinguish professors from nominal Christians.

1. It is *Scriptural:* when it is as it ought to be, we adopt the truths embodied in the profession as the words of God, etc.: the nominal is more on human authority, as from a nurse, etc.—not that it is worse thereby. * * * Of all cant, the cant of infidels is the most contemptible.

But we should have a *better reason* for embracing Christianity. This is no better than a Mohammedan has, or a man in South Seas, for his idols: the true Christian does so because he is satisfied it is God's word, and nothing but with a "thus saith the Lord."

2. It is *experimental*—not a notion: he realizes the comforting and sanctifying influences. Such were the Hebrews: "partakers of Christ"—not externals only—but intimate union: they partook of the merit of his death to purge them from guilt.—One spirit with their glorified Savior—"they had believed to the saving of their souls"—not to the conviction of the judgment only.

3. It is *practical*—adorned in his conduct: so the Hebrews: a zeal for performing God's will, and a patience in suffering it. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to his saints, and do minister:" not talking—boasting—but working professors: not captious, contending ones, as if they considered religion merely to exercise ingenuity upon, but loving ones: "call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly while ye were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly while ye became companions of them that were so used." This is spoken of their patience. Nominal Christians often abandon their religion when sufferings come: they only stand in sunshine. But real Christians are different: they will *suffer* for it, and become companions of them so used; not like Demas, or those who left him at his first answer, but like Onesiphorus.

Such is the character of a true professor; such are to hold fast—persevere in it—danger of being induced to abandon our profession: this danger arises variously.

(1.) *Satan* is busy as a lion: infidels, his allies, endeavor to seduce others. Erroneous opinions also are propagated in the Christian world, which would deprive it of all of value; as the denying the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, etc.—What would be left worth holding fast? Nothing to make a religion *for sinners*—no *Gospel.* Some moral precepts would be left—but this is not a religion for *sinners*—no good news. We intimate nothing against morality when connected with Christianity. If one violated the civil laws, and were sentenced to death, and about to die, imagine one comes with bustle, and cries, "I bring thee Gospel, good news." What would you think? A pardon—for that alone would be Gospel. But suppose he gravely pulls out the act that constitutes the offense; would not reading this be mockery? Not but that the act is good: however good the *law,* it is not *Gospel.* Such preach some ministers called *Gospel rational* Christians.

(2.) The *world* is an enemy to our profession also; and,

(3.) The enemies of our own household, our *hearts,* if not sanctified, and even

then kept with all diligence, we shall lose. Hence the need of the exhortation, "let us hold fast our profession."

1. Hold the belief of evangelical *doctrine:* maintain charity to all; but determine that none spoil us of the belief of the Gospel by philosophy.

2. Hold fast the experimental profession of evangelical *privileges*—thankful for Christ in our Bibles—pulpits—creeds—yet satisfied with nothing less than Christ in our *hearts.*

3. Hold fast evangelical *duties.* "If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Finally. Hold fast the readiness meekly, yet fearlessly, to profess that religion, the *doctrine* of which we thus *believe,* the *profession* of which we *experience,* the *duties* of which we *exemplify.* Do not skulk into corners.

II. The motive derived from Christ's priesthood.

The terms of the motive, "We have a great High-priest." The best of men are most deeply sensible of their corruption and guilt: to such this doctrine of his priesthood is full of comfort—chiefly discussed in this epistle. *We* Christians have a High-priest. Under the law he made atonement by sacrifice, and then on the ground thereof entered the Holy of Holies, and offered up intercessions. So we, but in a more efficacious manner—a *great* High-priest—Paul wishes to contrast—a *greater* than Aaron.

Three grounds of his superiority.

1. Because of where he exercises his ministry—in the *heavens!* Aaron in the Tabernacle—then in the Temple: though splendid, it could decay, and has decayed: as the Jewish could only be exercised at the place appointed by God, so when they have not that place they cannot exercise it. But see ours, "Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." What comfort! Even his *human nature* there—a friend at *court:* so we may at all times order our cause, and be sure of a gracious audience.

2. From the more substantial nature of the benefits he confers: this is inferred in his name "*Jesus,*" a *Savior,* save from sins. Aaron was no Jesus, nor his successors; nor the sacrifices, whose virtue was discerned by *faith,* as *types.* But our High-priest is *Jesus,* a Savior—he can cleanse—*once* suffered, and all merit is in his sacrifice.

3. Because of the superior dignity of his original nature, "the Son of God"—"the brightness of his glory and express image of his person." Aaron and his successors were sons of men, and, as such, were sinful—fallen nature—personal transgressors—offered up atonement for their own sins—*mortal* also—they died, and often by death there was no high-priest. But ours is the Son of God! Sinless: though a humanity, a sinless one—unchargeable with a single guilt—needs no sacrifice for himself—all the stock of his infinite merit is applicable to the purposes of human salvation. Now *immortal;* though dead, he lives—impossible he should be holden of death—even of the manhood—*now* he liveth—*ever*—any moment you may come without fear (of disappointment) of a High-priest to offer for us. "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated

forevermore" (this—not "*man*"—but *Son*): "he makes the Son," not a man, high-priest forever!

Now wherein consists the force of this motive?

(1.) On account of Christ's priesthood we *ought.*

(2.) We *can* hold fast our profession.

1. We *ought.* Unless some flaw in the Gospel, why change it? Why careless about it—about the propagation of it? It is a *perfect* system—no flaw—and it is Jesus passing into the heavens which *stamps* the whole.

You are *sinners:* no religion will suit you that does not say how you are to be pardoned. The Gospel does this by saying you have a High-priest: the way is opened by his blood, and kept open by his intercession. Not *guilty* only, but *corrupt* also: no religion will suit you but what shows how you may destroy this. The Gospel tells you by saying you have a High-priest, procuring for you the Holy Ghost to *renovate* you: the Gospel in the priesthood of Christ has a cure, a cordial for all, etc.—Why, then, go elsewhere? You *ought,* then, to hold fast; you will never get a better: no pardon elsewhere—but damned!

2. Some fear they cannot hold fast—fightings, temptations, world, etc. "I shall be overcome and lose it." So you would if left to yourselves, with all your grace and power, if deprived of *farther* intercourse. But, "seeing then that we have a great High-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." You have a High-priest, and he is Jesus, and his blood is so infinite in merit that he can ask of God anything.—Such a friend! Use him, and you are a match for all by the Spirit procured by Jesus. You may stand, and having done all, stand. Even *thou* worm Jacob—fight and overcome. If Jesus be on thy side, and thou availest thyself of his promised help, thou mayest overcome the powers of darkness.

ABUNDANT LIFE.

JAMES STALKER, D.D.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—John x: 10.

To anyone who is a close observer of religious phenomena and knows a little of history there can be few things more striking than the way in which the form of presenting the Gospel changes. The substance of the Gospel, of course, does not change, but the form of presenting it is always undergoing modification. The mind of the public changes, and the way in which the Gospel is presented to it must change, too. Fifty years ago there were noble evangelical preachers in the pulpits of this land, and noble sermons were preached. Some of you are old enough to remember them, and you never can forget them. But I should like to ask that, if the same sermons, without modification, were preached now, would they make the same impression? It is more than doubtful. Just as on the Day of Pentecost every one heard the mighty works of God in the language in which he was born, so, too, every generation requires to have the Gospel presented in a different form. Every great religious revival has its

own watchword. The watchword of the Reformation was "Justification by Faith," and those words showed quite clearly on what the thoughts of men were bent. They were fixed on God, whose favor was their all in all. But in the great evangelical revival of last century the point of view was totally different. The spiritual awakening was not turned directly to God, but rather to man, and the texts which came home with power to men's minds were, "Ye must be born again"; "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" and the like. Now it looks as if we have reached a new bend in the journey of humanity, when a new aspect of the Gospel will have to be presented under a new name. And what is to be the new watchword? I dare say a good many would say that it is to be the Kingdom of God. Those of you who read theology at all are aware how frequently this phrase has been turning up of late in the best theological writings. It denotes the social aspect of Christianity, and what those who make use of it mean is that, whereas in the last generation the spiritual awakening thought more about the salvation of their own individual souls and their own eternal destiny; in the coming generation men will rather be awakened by the fear of the evil they may do by a wicked life, and they will come to Christ for the power to live a life beneficial to the community. Well, I am quite aware that a very great deal might be said for that view; and yet it seems to me that there is a more penetrating word, that comes still closer to the heart of this generation. I question if the aspirations of any age have ever been more accurately expressed than the aspirations of the present age in the well known words:

> It's life of which your veins are scant,
> Oh, life, not death, for which we pant!
> More life, and fuller, that I want.

That seems to me to be the longing of young and thoughtful minds at the present time, the longing for life, more life, full and abundant life. Now, the astonishing thing is, How the Word of God is able to meet all such demands as they arrive. Humanity travels forward from point to point, and at every new turn the Word of God is there waiting its coming, ready to accompany it on the next stage of its progress. What the German thinker Novalis said about Shakespeare is far truer of the Bible—that in it the last and deepest observers will still find new harmonies with the infinite structure of the universe, affinities with latent ideas, concurrences with the higher powers and senses of men; for example, the longing of the present generation is for life, and look what the response is in our text: "I am come that they might have life, and they they might have it more abundantly."

There is one sense in which life may be said to be obviously the most universally and ardently desired of all things—that is, in the sense of its prolongation. "Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life." When a hotel is on fire, or a ship is going down, will not the richest man give all his wealth for the single chance of escape, and offer up to heaven ten thousand thanks if he does escape, even on these hard conditions? But still more significant is the conduct of those at the opposite end of the scale of fortune. Even those whose whole life is a struggle and a defeat are just as anxious to live as the wealthy; the old cling to life as much as the young; in fact, the shorter the fraction of life that is to be lived, the more does it seem to be prized. This being the universal sentiment, it might have been expected that Christ would respond to it by prolonging the life of those who believed in him. It might have been part of the Gospel that all who believed in Jesus Christ should live, say, twice as long as the average—that they might live for 150 years. But this is no part of the Gospel. I do not, indeed, say that Christianity has no influence on the prolongation of life. I dare say if true Christians could be accurately separated from the rest

of the world, perhaps their lives might be insured at a lower premium than the average, because their careful habits and happy dispositions give them the chance of living longer than the average. And yet Christians are unable any more than others to boast themselves of to-morrow for they cannot tell what any day may bring forth, and there are innumerable instances in which the finest Christian spirits are first taken away, so that we still repeat the old heathen saying, that whom the gods love die young. It is not, then, by prolonging life in this world that Christ fulfills the promise of this text.

But, surely, there are other ways of increasing the value of anything besides by its prolongation. If you have a bar of gold and want to double its value, you may do so, no doubt, by doubling its length, but you may also do so by doubling its thickness, and in certain circumstances this may be more serviceable. Now life, in the same way, may be increased in value, not by being prolonged, but by being deepened. If two men live a year, but one of them puts in every day twice as much work and enjoyment and usefulness as the other, his life is, of course, far more valuable than the other. This is what Christ does, he deepens our lives. I well remember a friend of my own who had gone a great length, living what is called a fast life and exploring, as he thought at the time, all the heights and depths of existence, but on whom God had mercy. I remember his saying to me with great earnestness, on one occasion, that he would not give one day of his changed life for all the years of pleasure that he had previously enjoyed. And that is the tone in which all true Christians are disposed to talk when they are contrasting their old lives with the new. Among men of the world it is a common enough question whether life is worth living, but among true and hearty Christians there is no such question possible—God makes their life golden, he deepens it, and that is what he means when in our text he says, I am come to give life, and to give it more abundantly.

There is another way in which the promise of the text may be understood—that they are given a higher kind of life. Natural science, in classifying the multitudinous objects of the world, distinguishes different kinds of life in nature. The simplest and lowest kind is vegetable life, which has many interesting and impressive characteristics; then higher up the scale there is animal life. It may be somewhat difficult to distinguish it from vegetable life at its incipient stages, but in its more developed stages it has perfectly well-known characteristics, the chief of which is voluntary motion; and then, higher up still, there is the life of man, whose distinguishing characteristic is perhaps self-consciousness. These are the three types of life which natural science recognizes. But is there a fourth kind above these three? The Bible always says that there is—it is spiritual life, the life of the spirit. The spirit is the highest and noblest thing in man. It is what connects him with God and eternity, just as other powers and faculties connect him with this world and with time. Sometimes the Bible speaks as if the spirit were non-existent in the natural man; but in other places, and perhaps more exactly, it speaks of it as not developed. At all events, it has not attained its position of superiority and supremacy because the spirit ought to stand up above the other faculties of man and command life. And so essential is this to the Divine conception of man, that where this spiritual element is not operative the Bible speaks of human beings as dead, however much they may be alive in the lower ranges of their faculties. For instance, the Bible says, "She that liveth in pleasures is dead while she liveth." Just look at a woman or a girl who liveth in pleasure. Why, is not she the very picture of life? Her body is so glowing with life that her beauty attracts all who see her; her mental life may also be so rich that, wherever she moves in the circles where she seeks her pleasures, she is accompanied by a crowd who admire her wit and cleverness; and her emotional life may be in so healthy a condition that she has a heart rich in love to give to the happy man who is able to win it. She seems to be the very

picture of life. Yes! but follow her into another section of existence, where a different set of powers comes into operation, and there you will find that she prays not, she thinks not of God, she neither loves nor serves Christ, and she is not laying up treasure in heaven, and she is not prepared to die; in short, her spirit, the finest thing in man, the true glory of womanhood, in her is dead; and so, as Scripture says, "She is dead while she liveth." Of course, to those who have themselves no experience of the spiritual life such language must sound exaggerated. But those who have had experience of both conditions, who once were sunk in sin, but now are washed and purified and sanctified; to whom Christ once was nothing, but now is everything; to whom God once seemed the being in all the universe from whom they had most to fear, but now is their Father and their Friend; to whom eternity was once nothing but a fearful looking forward to of judgment, but is now the home of the spirit and the treasury in which their principal possessions are laid up—I say of such people that through the awakening of the spirit within them they have passed from death unto life.

The principal characteristic of the life which Christ promises in this text is still to be mentioned—it is eternal. You are aware how frequently in scripture this adjective is jointed with life, and how frequently eternal life is spoken of as the supreme gift of Christianity, as, for instance, in the text, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It has been called in question whether this term adds anything to those features of the life which Christ gives which have already been enumerated. About a generation ago there reigned a somewhat heated controversy on this subject. It was carried on principally between the High Church and the Broad Church in England, and the way in which the question was put was this: Whether eternal is a quantitative or a qualitative term. The discussion was whether eternal referred to the endlessness of the life, or denoted its spirituality and excellence. I think that discussion closed, as many another has done, like the fabled one in which the two knights contended with each other as to whether a certain shield was gold or silver. In reality it was gold on one side and silver on the other, so that they were both right and they were both wrong. I say this discussion ended, I think, by the demonstration that eternal life is both a quantitative and a qualitative term. Those of you who may never have thought of eternal as meaning anything else but just for ever may be at a loss to understand how it could ever be supposed to have another meaning; but let me give you a hint that will open up the subject to you. In that discussion the Broad Church pointed out what is undoubtedly the fact, that in the Gospel of St. John it is frequently said that in this world we may have eternal life; so that according to St. John, eternity is something which exists now. It is not to begin at death, or at the end of this world, and eternal life is that which has come out of eternity and belongs to it—it is the life lived by those who reside in eternity, it is the life worthy of eternity. Now I think that is an important point with you, because what Christ promises is not the mere endless continuation of existence, and besides, it is possible to give such pictures of future life as rob it of all interest. Pictures of heaven have been given by preachers so unnatural, so ghostly, so fantastic, that it is impossible for them to lay hold of the minds of men; so that the quality of the future life is quite as important as the quantity. On the other hand, I do not think the Broad Church did a good turn to the mind of England if in that discussion it ignored and minimized the endless continuation of the life which Christ gives. It may be a result of that that you sometimes meet people at the present time who tell you they do not want life in the next world. They tell you that one existence is quite enough for them. That, however, is only due to a lack of vitality. The greatest spirits of our life, even in heathenism, have all eagerly longed for a continuation of life, and the tendencies of humanity are to be judged by its greatest, and not by its smallest

specimens. Ministers and preachers of the present day, whether from a desire to accentuate the truth that religion would be a good thing for this life, even though there were no future life, or even with a view to satisfy objections and conceptions of the next life, sometimes in their preaching make light of the life to come; but I venture to say that in no circumstances is this in accordance with the mind of Christ, because in Christ's preaching there is nothing more frequent or certain than the life to come, and throughout the entire Apostolic preaching this was put forward as the great motive of Christian living. We see in this world already the beginnings of eternal life, and these all, when examined closely, suggest that it is endless, and not subject to the law of decay which belongs to life of every other kind. Life, in general, it must be confessed, is subject to this law. In this world all things wax and wax for a time, and then from hour to hour they drop and rot. This is true of the plant and of the animal. Beautiful it is to see the plant waxing, "first the blade, and then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear;" and still more beautiful, the child growing into a chubby boy, and the boy into a noble-purposed youth, and the youth into a man. And yet very soon a reverse process sets in. The grass withereth and fadeth, and the man fadeth; the color falls from the cheek of beauty, the hand begins to shake, the hair grows thin and white, the intellect totters upon its throne. Undoubtedly that seems to be the universal law; but I say the life of the spirit is not subject to that law. Look at the aged saint! What is natural in him is all following the ordinary law of decline; his body dwindles, his faculties show weakness one after another, and the circle of his activity contracts. Yes; but when his outward man faileth his inward man is renewed day by day, his holiness only grows more white, his walk with God more close, his appreciation of Christ more complete. It might seem, indeed, as if his influence were decaying because he can go no more among men; he can bear witness for Christ no more. And yet that is not the case, for the very spectacle of his sweet and tranquil piety is to young minds a demonstration of the reality and the value of religion far superior to that which can be given by the most ardent zeal or the most splendid eloquence, and the testimony of the consciousness of such a man always is, even to the last, that things with him are only beginning. In many ways he is led to believe this, but chiefly because Christ is his goal, and that is an infinitely distant goal. This is our destiny to be like Christ, and that is endless ascent. But Christ is not only our goal, but he is also the guarantee that we shall reach it. There is no fear of the energy failing which we require for this ascent if we are united to him with a tie which nothing can break, because he is filled with the fulness of God, and because through him we shall live also.

I do not know how far this word life appeals to my hearers to-day. I am quite sure there are numbers hearing me to whom it does appeal. This is the very thing that they want—life, and life more abundant. There is a picture most artistically sketched in one of our hymns that often rises before my eyes when I enter the pulpit on Sunday morning, and is very specifically before me to-day.

It is a picture of one of those crowds of diseased people which our Lord often encountered in the days of his flesh, when he went out of a house or entered a village; there they were, all collected from every quarter—the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the palsied, the leper, even the dead.

What was the character of such a crowd? It was the lack of life. In some it was lacking altogether, and in all the rest the thread of it had become very slender, the tide of it was very low. But look who advances—it is the Lord of Life; he moves from rank to rank, his glances showering among them, his words fall upon their ears, his hand touches them, and lo! the transformation—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Now the hymn says that we are that crowd. What is our characteristic? Is it

not lack of life? Some of us may lack it altogether, in others the tide is very low. Many a heart is earnestly sighing, "Oh life, more life!" But look who is come among us—the same, the Lord of Life! Have you no boon to ask him? Will you not come to meet him as he comes to meet you? Come with faith, because he that believeth hath everlasting life, and the words of Christ are still the same as those of olden time," I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

MATTHEW SIMPSON.

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What think ye of Christ?—Matt. xxii:42.

Coming this morning into a house erected for Christian worship, this question, which has been sounding through the ages—which came from the lips of Christ himself, and was intended for all men—may not improperly claim our thoughts. The words were uttered when Jesus was about to finish his stay upon earth. He had traveled with the disciples throughout Judea and Galilee. The three years of his ministry were ending. He had come up to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Having lodged at Bethany, he had entered the city, where the multitude had recognized him as the Messiah, and with hosannas of praise had said, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Vast numbers were here gathered from all parts of the Holy Land, and strangers who had come up to celebrate the Passover, for many Jews lived in distant countries. They were moved by the excitement of the people, and as the multitude clustered around the person of Christ, the Scribes and the Pharisees resolved, if possible, to perplex him by their questions; to involve him unpleasantly with the government by asking him whether they should pay tribute to Cæsar; to involve him unpleasantly in some of their own controversies, by asking him questions upon doctrine. He answered them all with such wisdom that they were confounded, and then, turning to them, proposed a question—a question not foreign to their thoughts—one which was contained in their own catechism—"What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" They said, as they were taught to say, "The son of David." Then he presses the further question, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" They were unable to answer. "And from that day forth," it is said, "durst no man ask him any more questions."

Now in these words I notice, first, that Christianity is a system of thought. It challenges thought. It does not come as a system of authority, commanding absolute, unthinking obedience, but, addressed to our minds, it calls into play all the faculties which God gives us. It appeals to us as reasonable men; and it is said, in other parts of revelation, "Come, let us reason together." Man's highest attributes are addressed. He is not brought under subjection as a beast of the field; he is not coerced by the will of another. Christ addresses himself to the better judgment of man; and

Christianity is suited to awaken reflection in the bosom of every one. Unlike other systems which had commanded the people to worship they knew not what, even an unknown god; unlike Mohammedanism, which appeals to force, to the power of the sword; unlike false systems of Christianity, which have been unwilling that men should think for themselves, and have persecuted them, Christ's religion addresses us as reasoning beings. It commands us to think; and in this respect it commends itself to the acceptance of men. It awakens attention. It sets the faculties God has given man into active play, and prepares him for his grandest discoveries, for all the works of art and taste with which society may be embellished.

But not only is Christianity a system which dwells in the realm of ideas—whose home is eternity, whose theatre is the universe, whose object is human destiny—but it excites in all minds the highest class of thoughts. And this is one reason why it is so frequently overlooked among men. We are thinking beings, but the duties near us call us to dwell upon material interests chiefly. We are studying how we may gain a livelihood, how we may have enjoyment, how we may care for our families, how we may build our cities, how we may construct our governments, how we may advance arts, and how we may perfect our sciences. These are objects which force themselves upon the attention of man from day to day; and because Christianity does not directly take hold of them, many of us thrust it aside; we wait for a more convenient opportunity; we think we must settle, first, matters of trade; discuss, first, questions of science, finance; ascertain great principles of government. Because Christianity speaks to us of the kingdom of heaven, of our spiritual nature, of the world to which we are going, of our relations to the unseen, we put it away from us as something that has not just now a claim upon us.

And, indeed, there are some who, because it directs us to the unseen and eternal, scarcely consider it to be worthy of their consideration. But we find this, that all through the sacred volume revelation represents itself to be the great subject that man ought to study. For instance, take the expression, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Men desire to be wise. We wish to educate our children. We ourselves are desiring to learn. Many are anxious to climb to the pinnacle of fame. We forget oftentimes that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. We do not discern the connection between our relations to God and the daily business of life. Again, our Savior says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." That is, "Seek not what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed." Let not the mind run merely upon the business of the day, on trade, on home, on the affairs of life. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you;" declaring that the thoughts connected with revelation are ground thoughts, out of which spring other thoughts; that if you wish to erect the structure of civilization the corner-stone must be Christ Jesus—the foundation, Christ and the apostles and prophets—and then the superstructure will rise, until the glorious dome shall top over all.

But there be those who ask, How is it that thoughts spiritual and eternal, how is it that thoughts concerning Christ and his mission, thus do lie at the foundation? They have nothing directly to do with earning our bread, regulating our stores, building our factories, extending our railroads, stretching our telegraph wires, sending out our steamships. What has this knowledge of Christ and his person to do with the duties of life? I may answer, the invisible lies at the root of the visible, of all growth, of all power. We are just now in the spring-time of the year, and as you look at the trees they are beginning to bud; the tender leaf is coming out; the flower stalk that was buried for the winter shoots up; it spreads its branches. Why were not these signs of life seen a month ago? It is the temperature of the air, the moisture of the

earth, it is the unseen influence of electricity, of heat, that works upon all these, and nature responds.

Now, when Christ reveals himself as the power that draws the human eye towards God, this power seems to us to have little to do with the business of life, and yet it inspires honesty and purity and rectitude and hopefulness. It joins man to the throne of God, and makes him feel that he is a son of God. He is an heir of immortality. He begins a being that is to run on parallel with the very being of God. He has a life here just budding, germinating; its flower and fruit are to be in a more glorious clime. Here we are children, we are pilgrims; we travel our journey a few days, and drop into the grave, and the ground covers us; but the morning of the resurrection comes, and in beauty and in glory we shall stand before the throne of God, higher than the angels of God, for they shall be our servants. And when thoughts like these occupy the mind, swell the emotions, elevate the being, man forgets, to some extent, the little spot of earth that he treads. When he considers what he shall be when he shall sit down with Christ on his throne, man has objects of grandeur to pursue; he lifts his eye from the things of earth to things unseen, and you find him no longer savage and uncivilized and selfish; he curbs his passions, he rules his appetites, he is governed by reason; his imagination stretches into eternity, and gives him wings of faith by which he rises towards the unseen. "And he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (Christ) is pure." So that it is not unreasonable that thought should alter the whole character of life, and that this primal thought, "What think ye of Christ?" should change the whole face of society.

Now, to the Jew this question came with a little different meaning from that which it has for us. "What think ye of Christ?" said Jesus; "whose son is he?" The word "Christ," as understood by the Jew, signified the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. It was the designation of office; it signified the Anointed One. Who was he to be? The prophets had foretold that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. This great picture of prophecy was hung up before the world. There was to come one from the posterity of the woman who should conquer evil. Then, again, it was said that in Abraham should all the nations of the earth be blessed; and to Isaac and to Jacob it was repeated: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The dying Jacob saw the "Shiloh" coming when the sceptre was departing from Judah. The prophets beheld a great and glorious One, sometimes called a "Branch," sometimes called a "Shepherd," sometimes a "Lamb," sometimes the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah." There was a great diversity of characters under which this coming Messiah was represented, and I do not wonder that the Jews were embarrassed, because God intended to picture him in all his different offices. To the Jew he was a mystery, and he would have been so to us. For instance, he was to be a victor and a ruler; he was to teach the people; of his government and kingdom there should be no end; he was to be "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And yet he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We hid as it were our faces from him. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

How could these opposite characteristics belong to the same man? It would seem to be almost impossible, and hence the Jew rested upon the idea that these expressions were purely figurative. He could scarcely apply them, but he chose rather to think of a ruler, a conqueror, an earthly prince, coming like one of the old potentates who swept with such power over surrounding nations. The Jew expected one who was to make Judaism the great power of the world, who would choose Jerusalem for his capital, and from Jerusalem wield a scepter that should command the very ends of the earth. He was to be the son of David, to sit on David's throne. The other idea, of

his suffering for sin and making an atonement for sin, of his being a spiritual Savior, was less clearly taken into their minds. But the question "What think ye of Christ?" as directed to them, had all of this power of which I have spoken. If they were to learn what Christ was to be they must read the Old Testament scriptures; they must examine carefully the whole line of prophecy. Here was the appeal to thought; here was the invitation to study; here was a bringing up of human reason to the question of comparing the promises of God with their fulfilment. And no man could be a good Jew without being a good student. Hence they were taught to talk to their children; to teach them by day and by night, at their rising up and at their sitting down; and the law was to be written upon their frontlets, bound upon their garments, and to be their chief concern in their business and in their leisure.

The question, as addressed to us, has a wider range. It is, What are the characteristics of the Messiah? Do these characteristics meet in Jesus of Nazareth? Is he the Christ promised in the Old Testament? The preaching of the apostles was intended to prove that Jesus was the Christ. They appealed to Moses and the prophets; they reasoned out of the scriptures. But, as I have said, to us a wider sphere is opened. We have the same prophecies, the same characteristics to examine, but we have now the accomplished facts in the life of Jesus. We see him meeting all the requirements of prophecy; we see him displaying wisdom, love, power, benevolence. And then we see not only Jesus himself, but we see the results of his mission, the effects of his teaching, his example; we see how society has been influenced, how the beautiful system which he established on earth has been gradually developed, and that to-day he is living and breathing and working through his Church among the sons of men. And when we ask to-day, "What think ye of Christ?" the question to us is, Is Jesus of Nazareth the divine Messiah? is he the man sent of God to save the world? is he such a one that we can trust our all in his hands? Can we commit our children to his care? can we feel that society is safe under his teaching? are there hopes to come to us through his life, his teaching, and his resurrection? So that the subject has to us all the force of a personal appeal.

I do not propose this morning to enter largely into the scriptural argument. I do not purpose to prove how perfectly prophecy meets in the life of Christ. If I had time I would delight to develop this argument and to show how all the prophecies are fulfilled in Christ; how he was born of a virgin, the seed of the woman; how he came in the town predicted, in Bethlehem, at the precise time, foretold hundreds of years before, how his advent was a matter of interest to heaven, as well as to earth; and how all the prophecies met in him, as they have never been claimed to meet in any other being; and thus that Jesus is the Christ of Old Testament prediction. But I purpose to-day to take a wider range, and consider something that may connect itself more fully with what we see in the world around us. For, in the first place, if Christ be not divine, if he be not the Messiah, the Son of God, then his claim to be such was false. And if he could make a claim to be the Son of God when he was not; if he accepted worship when no mere man ought to be worshiped; if he allowed his disciples to call him divine when he was not, then he was an impostor; and, if an impostor, then a wicked man; and, if a wicked man, then no one ought to believe in him; no one ought to praise him; no one ought to rely on him. No one can grow better by relying upon a bad man, following a falsehood, believing what is untrue. If Christ was not God and an object of worship, then his willingness that men should worship him made him a participant in blasphemy; for it is blasphemy to worship any other than God.

Now, then, we look back for eighteen hundred years to ascertain the fruits of Christ's coming. There might be systems that would flourish for a day, and yet have in them the seeds of decay; there might be errors not exploded; it might require time. We stand and look through eighteen hundred years, and can trace to-day the results

of believing and following Christ, and see what is the influence of that faith—first, on the world. We can now come to the man of business and brain, and can appeal to the ages and to their fruits, and say, "What think you of Christ?" Do the results show that believing in him does good to mankind? does it improve society? does it purify character? or does it degrade, does it impoverish, does it sink our race?

Now, first, notice this strange fact. Wherever Christ has been preached all other systems of worship have passed away. How can you account for it? At the time he appeared there was a beautiful system of worship in Greece. The Parthenon, one of the most splendid buildings man ever erected, crowned the Acropolis of Athens. There were statues of Jupiter and Venus, and Juno and Minerva, and Diana, not only throughout Italy, but throughout the then civilized world. At the altars hundreds of sacrifices were offered. Men came to wash away sins. They implored these deities as protectors of their towns, their cities, their families. In almost every house there was an altar. Christ began to be preached, and under the preaching of Christ the whole system has passed away. To-day there is not a man in the world who worships Jupiter; there is not one who bows the knee to Juno or Minerva. The people might cry for two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" but no man now bows the knee to Diana; no man makes her images or sells her shrines. There is idolatry still in the world, but it is an idolatry of ignorance. Go into India and visit the temples, and take the idols there, and they are objects of terror and aversion. There are idols in Africa, but they are of rough stone or wood—images deformed and base. Every attribute of beauty is stripped from idolatry. All the worship of art has departed from heathen systems; and to-day the art of the world, the statuary of the world, the architecture of the world, gather about Christianity. The pictures in your homes are the Madonna and the Infant Child, or Faith and Hope and Charity. Mankind recognizes these. No one wants the forms of heathenism; but the pure, inspiring truths of Christianity have come to us, and how is it, I ask, that the thought of Christ has swept away all other thoughts if Christ be not divine? They have gone wherever Christ is preached. What think ye of him? Is he divine? If he were a man, how would talking about him banish idols, cleanse worship, throw down altars? Ah, the lamb does not now bleed at the altar; there are not streams of gore; no human sacrifices are found. Jesus reigns, and men whisper his name over the earth, and wherever men whisper his name all other systems depart.

But, again, not only do we find this effect wrought upon systems of worship, we find it wrought upon literature. Now, if Christ be a mere man, how can you account for it that his words should be startling the ends of the earth more than the words of Plato—one of the grandest thinkers the world ever saw—or of Socrates? How should the words of Christ, uttered to the multitude gathered about him by the sea, be ringing through the world and influencing men more than the words of Demosthenes? So far as oratory is concerned—I may say it with reverence and yet with truthfulness—Demosthenes was a greater orator than ever was Jesus of Nazareth. The scholars read selections from his orations in the schools; the few look into them; but the words of Jesus—children are studying them, they are translated into all languages, and men are poring over them. Thousands to-day are reading the teaching of Christ where one is studying the writings of Plato. How can you explain it? If he is a mere man, why are his words resounding through the world, and the words of sages forgotten! "What think ye of Christ?" His words are ringing out because he is God. He is the Savior of sinners. As the result, wherever Christ's words go, letters go. Where, to-day, is the cultivated intellect of the world? Trace it, and you trace the line where Christianity moves. Your school-houses, your academies, your seminaries, your books, your printing-presses—why is it they are found just where Christ is preached?

Oh, tell me, "What think ye of Christ?" The thought of Christ is the inspiration

of literature. There are unbelievers among us, and they sometimes assume a lofty importance, and try to look down upon Christians. These very unbelievers have any importance because they are the children of Christian mothers. They learn the name of Christ in infancy, and grow under Christian civilization, wear Christian clothes, eat Christian food, breathe Christian air, read Christian books, travel Christian railroads, and get their thoughts by Christian telegraphs. They are living on Christianity, growing by Christianity, and yet they try to deride Christianity. If Christianity be untrue, let these men go where the truth is, build up a civilization without Christ, and then try, if they can, to construct a society.

Not only so, the comforts of our daily life, the very point I raised at the beginning, wonderfully come, strangely come, through the teaching of Christ. Go among savages, and how uncertain is their food! how precarious their livelihood! what poor clothing they wear! blankets, moccasins, feathers on their head—strange dress! Go among Mohammedan nations; how poor, comparatively! and how little the comfort of their daily life! Their houses compare not with ours; their towns, their cities, compare not with ours; their trade, their commerce, compare not with ours. Who send out the ships? who build the factories! who have every means of enjoyment? Christian nations. They sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things were added to them. Christian mother, the comfort of your home is due to the influence of Christianity; and you are taking your little boy in your arms, and your little girl on your knee, and you have a husband and they a father to share with you in household comforts and joys, because Christ's words are ringing through the world. Sisters of mine and of Christ, you are in this house this morning because Christianity is preached. Outside of Christendom women come not to hear as you do, and to mingle in the great congregation. Degraded, abandoned, neglected, they are trampled upon. There is no such thing as home in our sense of the word except where Christ's words are known. And now, "What think ye of Christ?" If you think of your homes, think of the Savior who gives you the homes. If you think of your enjoyments, think of Christ, whose arms encircle you, and whose Spirit, breathing upon you, gives you all this sweet comfort and peace. Would you reject Christ? You reject home and purity and comfort and elevation.

But, again, is it not strange that wherever Christianity goes there go with it all the benevolent influences that give such grace to society? Said Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" It is the spirit of selfishness to neglect those about us; the spirit of Christ to care for all about us. When Jesus would teach who is my neighbor, he tells the beautiful story of the man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, and was stripped and left naked; a priest, seeing him, passed by on one side, as did also a Levite. But the despised Samaritan, between whom and the Jew there was perpetual hostility, when he saw the sufferer, did not say, "He is a Jew, an enemy of mine," but, "He is a man," and went and cared for him, and bound up his wounds and took him to an inn, and paid for his lodging, and promised to come and settle whatever the charges might be after a while when he got well; "And," said the Savior, "was he not the neighbor to him that fell among thieves? Go thou and do likewise." Wherever there are sons or daughters of sorrow, cheer them. Wherever there is a dying one, comfort him. Christianity is a system of benevolence and love. Christ's record is a record of pity. I am not astonished that the infidels of to-day, unlike the infidels of the last age, talk about the beauty of the character of Christ. They speak of his intellectual power and of his goodness, while they reject him as the Son of God.

How he taught, labored, blessed! If any were blind, he opened their eyes; if they were deaf, he unstopped their ears; if they were lame, he gave them power to walk; if they were lepers, he cleansed them; if they were sick, he healed them all; if they

were sad, his tears dropped and mingled with their tears. Yes, he cared even for the hunger of our bodies, and when the multitude stood exhausted, and the disciples said, "Send them away that they may buy bread," Jesus answered, "Make them sit down to eat." He had given them spiritual teaching; he wanted to show them his brotherly spirit. We invite the friends we love to our tables. Jesus, though he had no house to live in, though he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, yet the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" yet when he called the thousands about him, and they had sat entranced by his eloquence and the power of his teaching for days, he would set his table; and he set it not in a little room. Some of you have dining-halls, and can gather in masses and spread entertainment for them, and they rejoice. Jesus, poor as he was, was yet God over all. The mountain-side was his table, and the green earth was carpeted for sittings, and he seated the five thousand men, besides the women and children. He had but the five loaves and two small fishes, and the disciples replied to him, "What are they among so many?" and yet Jesus bade all of them sit down; and he took in his hand the little loaves and did break, and the fishes and divided, and said, "Peter, take this;" "James, take that;" "John, pass on that side." "Andrew, go out along this side." There I see them arranged on the mountain-slope, at the table of the Son of God; and yet if I had been there and at the outer edge of the circle I think I should have said, "There is nothing for me; there is something for those just around him; there is nothing for me." I think I see that poor widow yonder on the edge. She has her little boy beside her, crying for bread, and she has none to give him. I hear her say, "Oh, if I were only close by him, I might get a crumb that would satisfy the hunger of my suffering boy!" It was a little loaf, but the disciples came breaking, and went by this one and that, and kept breaking, and the multitude kept eating, and finally they reached the poor widow, and she took and gave to her boy, and he ate and was satisfied. And they all ate that feast at the table of the Son of God, and there were left, after all had eaten, twelve baskets full! The Son of God would not pass by one. And as he broke the bread among that vast multitude, and they ate and were satisfied, so he gives himself, the bread of life, for every human being. For the poorest of the poor, and the most sinful of the sinning, and the most destitute of the destitute, and the most depraved of the low, there is mercy and grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That was the personal exhibition of his love. Christianity is an outgrowth of Christ himself. He says, "As the Father hath sent me, so also have I sent you." That is the Church. Christians are to go on Christ's mission, and all true Christians, in spirit, are like Christ; and just as Christ was anxious to do good, so is every lover of Christ; and wide as was Christ's affection, so wide are our sympathies and affection for every human being. Just here let me say, some men tell us not to be anxious about the distant parts of the earth, but to care for home. I have this to say to you: If Christ had not been careful about every human being there had not been salvation for all. He died for you and me, and for the ends of the world, as much as for the people of Jerusalem; and when we get the mind that was in Christ we can't help feeling for the ends of the earth. We must feel for all for whom Christ died, if we are like Christ; and the Christianity that restricts itself, under any forms or circumstances, is not the true Christianity; it has not the likeness of Christ; the image is not clearly stamped on the metal; the superscription is not there. The Church of Christ, in its development, illustrates the life of Christ. Adam, as our federal head, our first parent, sinned. The consequences of his sin were not known by himself; the results of sin could not be seen by himself. Even though he lived nine hundred and thirty years, he could not see them all. Why, all the wars and all the persecution and all the bloodshed and all the misery that have come down through these six thousand years were a

stream that issued from the fountain of the first sin; and you can't see how exceedingly sinful is until you have given it a field for its full development.

All the wickedness sprang out of that first sin. Just as wickedness develops itself in the lapse of ages, and you see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, so, Christ being our spiritual head, as Adam was the natural, out of his work is developed the whole organism of his Church, which perpetuates his life. He lived for the ages, though he walked in Judea simply three years as a teacher. His words were to sound through the world, and the world is to be filled with the spirit of Christ and the words of Christ, but the ages must develop these. Well, now, the Church is developing just after his measure. I sometimes dwell, in thought, on that beautiful prophecy given by Isaiah: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, and Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Now, do you see the development? "A Child," "a Son"—something Wonderful—on, until a reign of universal peace. It is the triumph not of Christ personally, merely, but of Christianity. It began; it was like the little child in weakness. It grew; it was like the promising son when he came to be an heir, and as he approached years of manhood he was wonderful, and attracted attention. Christ's miracles were wonderful. Christianity has been wonderful, as it is renewing the earth. The questions I have asked you are wonderful in their character. What wonderful works Jesus did! but not only "Wonderful" and "Counselor," he is the "Mighty God." Christianity is to-day the ruling power of earth. Not that the Church wants power, but Christian people gain the power. A handful of Christianized men are not afraid of hosts in China and Japan or India! You have had it, in history, repeated over and over again. Then there are the exhibitions of power—power as applied. Where was discovered the power of steam—its application—but in a Christian land? Where were found the powers of the sunbeam, and their application in photography and in drawing? And then Christianity was the "everlasting father." By that I understand the father never ceasing to be piteous; always a father; not driving away his children, not hard-hearted, but sympathetic; and the Christian Church is that everlasting father that cares for the poor, is building asylums for the blind and deaf and insane and imbecile, hospitals for every form of sickness, for the outcast and unfortunate. There is sympathy in the Christian bosom. Christianity is like an everlasting father, laying its arms everywhere. Oh, I think we are to-day in the age of the everlasting father. We have passed the childhood and the sonship of Christianity—the age when it astonished by its miracle and wonders, when it simply stirred the intellectual powers of the world. We have reached the point where it has laid its hands on the powers of the earth, and now it is opening its heart of sympathy, and taking in the lowest of the low—all forms of suffering and misfortune—and the next age that shall be developed is that of "the Prince of Peace." I see the era coming. I see it in the proposals to arbitrate and in the efforts to avoid war. The age is coming when out of the heart of the Everlasting Father shall be developed the reign of the Prince of Peace. Christ is to reign King of kings and Lord of lords; and as he reigns, "the sword shall be beaten into the ploughshare and the spear into the pruning-hook, and men shall learn war no more." And, when that age comes, of his dominion there shall be no end. He shall reign until the universe shall crown him Lord of all.

"What think ye of Christ?" this Christ who came as the little babe, poor, weak, in his mother's arms, and yet to-day is stepping over mountain-tops in the magnitude of his power! I see him coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of his strength, and hear him cry out, "I that come in righteousness, am mighty to save"—not mighty to destroy, thank God! not mighty to humble, but mighty to save. He comes! he takes the little infant by the hand and clasps it to his

bosom; he takes the suffering widow and gently wipes away her tears; he goes to the bedside of the dying saint and whispers of his own glory in heaven. "What think ye of Christ?" Will you have him in your houses, your homes, your hearts? Will you take him for your Savior, Prince, and Ruler now and forever?

What men may think of Christ I know not; I know not what all of you think of Christ to-day; but I know this: the angels think of him as the Son of God and the Heir of Glory. The angels accompanied him when they were permitted to draw aside the curtain of heaven, and the choir of glory got down where their songs could be sung on earth. They sung of a coming Jesus—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." They saw the object of Messiah's coming, and made not only the heavens, but the very earth, for the time, ring with angelic joy. The angels crowded around him when they saw him in agony in Gethsemane, and would then have helped him; they thronged about him at the cross, but were not permitted to interfere; but when he had lain three days in the grave, when the third morning was coming, then they came from heaven again, and rolled away the stone; they placed the napkin and clothes at one end and the other of the sepulchre, and then when Mary came weeping they said, "He is not here." They told of his resurrection—the first notes of joy—and men, taking up these notes, have been repeating them through the earth.

The disciples said, "He is risen indeed, and appeared unto Peter;" and oh, that song! We have been singing it. The Easter is just gone by, that we have kept in memory of the resurrection of our Master. Earth and heaven have been singing, "Jesus has gone up on high." Yes, and when the angels saw him ascend from Mount Olivet, they came down to meet him and welcome him as he went up into glory, and said, as the disciples gazed heavenward, "This Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And when he went up did not the Psalmist hear the shout, "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates! ye everlasting doors give way, and the King of Glory shall come in!" The angels took him—the Creator of all, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father—and God himself says of him, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." He hath said, "I will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," and "he shall reign until all enemies shall be put under his feet." I know what the angels think of Jesus, what God the Father thinks of Jesus, what the dead thought of him when they that were in the graves heard the voice of the Son of God; I know what some of our dear friends think of him this morning, some who preached him and some who believed in him, and have gone up to heaven, who have been redeemed and washed and purified, and are now singing, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God, unto him be glory and power and dominion forever and ever."

And now what do you think of him? Some of your mothers clasped the cross with their dying arms, and went home triumphantly to the promised land; and you, their sons—what are you doing? Where are you lingering? Now and then you cast a look towards the cross, then you turn to the earth; now you hear a voice, and then shrink away; now you see the right, and then you turn from the right; now heaven calls, and you partly obey, and then you fall to earth again, and you drink in sin. O ye men of position, what think ye of Christ this morning? Is he not worthy your homage, your hearts, your lives? This morning resolve to give yourselves to God. Young man, in the prime of your life, what think you of Christ? If you will take him he will be your sun, your shield, will keep you from sin; will be in you a power to subdue appetite, and lead you in the highway of purity. I would I could address each of you this morning, What think ye of Christ? Why do you not love him? Why do you not serve him? Think of him; take him as your Savior, *your Savior*, to blo

out your sins. I preach him to you this morning as a Savior from sin; and I tell every one of you, with the fullest conviction of my judgment, and all the sympathies of my heart, Christ will wash your sins away. He says, "I am he that blotteth out your transgressions for mine own sake." He wants to save you; he longs to save you; he loves you with an everlasting love; he has been wooing you, calling for you, following you, inviting you, beckoning to you, pleading with you, entreating you to come to him all along the journey of life. Why will you stay away? why fly from such a Savior?

I delight to think that Christ is to reign; that Christ will reign; that the earth shall be conquered by him; that all nations shall own him; that by and by he will conquer death itself, and the whole world shall be changed by the brightness of his coming. There is a time when you shall see Christ as he is; shall stand before him; "for every eye shall see him," even "those who pierced him." I have buried, as have some of you, a son, and a mother, and a father, but the dear ones taken from our arms, we have laid them in the grave, and they are sleeping in our cemeteries here and there. Ah, they shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth. We shall be there, not as we are here to-day, scattered. How many ties join you to the other world, and you, and you. The circle to which you belong is, a large part of it, this morning, in the spirit land. Some of you live almost alone now, but you will not be alone then. All shall come. They shall hear Christ's voice; they shall think of him then as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; they shall think of him then as the One who puts his heel on the head of the serpent. He shall be our Deliverer, our Resurrection, and our Life. And then, through all eternity, we shall be like him.

I can ask no more. My children, saved through the blood of Jesus, shall be like him. My friends in Christ from whom I part in their weakness and sorrow, they shall be like him; and I, myself, saved as by fire, from corruption and from errors, and from infirmities—I too, even I, shall be like him. It is all I desire. O Jesus! I think of thee as my Savior, and thou wilt be my resurrection and everlasting life. And oh, that all this congregation may think of thee as their portion, their everlasting all!

LIFTING UP THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

C. H. SPURGEON.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.—Numbers xxi: 9.

Concerning our text and the serpent of brass. If you turn to John's gospel you will notice that its commencement contains a sort of orderly list of types taken from Holy Scripture. It begins with the creation. God said, "Let there be light," and John begins by declaring that Jesus, the eternal Word, is "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Before he closes his first chapter John has introduced a type supplied by Abel, for when the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Nor is the first chapter finished before we are reminded of Jacob's ladder, for we find our Lord declaring to Nathanael, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." By the time we have reached the third chapter we have come as far as Israel in the wilderness, and we read the joyful words, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We are going to speak of this act of Moses this morning, that we may all of us behold the brazen serpent and find the promise true, "every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon the brazen serpent, shall live." It may be that you who have looked before will derive fresh benefit from looking again, while some who have never turned their eyes in that direction may gaze upon the uplifted Savior, and this morning be saved from the burning venom of the serpent, that deadly poison of sin which now lurks in their nature, and breeds death to their souls. May the Holy Spirit make the word effectual to that gracious end.

I. I shall invite you to consider the subject first by noticing *the person in mortal peril* for whom the brazen serpent was made and lifted up. Our text saith, "It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Let us notice that the fiery serpents first of all came among the people because *they had despised God's way and God's bread.* "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." It was God's way, he had chosen it for them, and he had chosen it in wisdom and mercy, but they murmured at it. As an old divine says, "It was lonesome and longsome," but still it was God's way, and therefore it ought not to have been loathsome: his pillar of fire and cloud went before them, and his servants Moses and Aaron led them like a flock, and they ought to have followed cheerfully. Every step of their previous journey had been rightly ordered, and they ought to have been quite sure that this compassing of the land of Edom was rightly ordered, too. But, no; they quarreled with God's way, and wanted to have their own way. This is one of the great standing follies of men; they cannot be content to wait on the Lord and keep his way, but they prefer a will and way of their own.

The people, also, quarreled with God's food. He gave them the best of the best, for "men did eat angels' food;" but they called the manna by an opprobrious title, which in the Hebrew has a sound of ridicule about it, and even in our translation conveys the idea of contempt. They said "Our soul loatheth this light bread," as if they thought it unsubstantial, and only fitted to puff them out, because it was easy of digestion, and did not breed in them that heat of blood and tendency to disease which a heavier diet would have brought with it. Being discontented with their God they quarreled with the bread which he set upon their table, though it surpassed any that mortal man has ever eaten before or since. This is another of man's follies; his heart refuses to feed upon God's word or believe God's truth. He craves for the flesh-meat of carnal reason, the leeks and the garlic of superstitious tradition, and the cucumbers of speculation; he cannot bring his mind down to believe the Word of God, or to accept truth so simple, so fitted to the capacity of a child. Many demand something deeper than the divine, more profound than the infinite, more liberal than free grace. They quarrel with God's way, and with God's bread, and hence there come among them the fiery serpents of evil lusting, pride, and sin. I may be speaking to some who have up to this moment quarreled with the precepts and the doctrines of the Lord, and I would affectionately warn them that their disobedience and presumption will lead to sin and misery. Rebels against God are apt to wax worse and worse. The world's fashions and modes of thought lead on to the world's vices and crimes. If we long for the fruits of Egypt we shall soon feel the serpents of Egypt. The natural consequence of turning against God like serpents is to find serpents waylaying our path. If we forsake the Lord in spirit, or in doctrine, temptation will lurk in our path and sin will sting our feet.

I beg you carefully to observe concerning those persons for whom the brazen serpent was specially lifted up that *they had been actually bitten by the serpents.* The Lord sent fiery serpents among them, but it was not the serpents being *among* them that involved the lifting up of a brazen serpent, it was the serpents having actually poisoned them which led to the provision of a remedy. "It shall come to pass that *everyone that is bitten,* when he looketh upon it, shall live." The only people who did look and derive benefit from the wonderful cure uplifted in the midst of the camp, were those who had been stung by the vipers. The common notion is that salvation is for good people, salvation is for those who fight against temptation, salvation is for the spiritually healthy: but how different is God's word. God's medicine is for the sick, and his healing is for the diseased. The grace of God through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ is for men who are actually and really guilty. We do not preach a sentimental salvation from fancied guilt, but real and true pardon for actual offenses. I care nothing for sham sinners: you who never did anything wrong, you who are so good in yourselves that you are all right—I leave you, for I am sent to preach Christ to those who are full of sin, and worth of eternal wrath. The serpent of brass was a remedy for those who had been bitten.

What an awful thing it is to be bitten by a serpent! I dare say some of you recollect the case of Gurling, one of the keepers of the reptiles in the Zoological Gardens. It happened in October, 1852, and therefore some of you will remember it. This unhappy man was about to part with a friend who was going to Australia, and according to the wont of man he must needs drink with him. He drank considerable quantities of gin, and though he would probably have been in a great passion if any one had called him drunk, yet reason and common-sense had evidently become overpowered. He went back to his post at the gardens in an excited state. He had some months before seen an exhibition of snake-charming, and this was on his poor muddled brain. He must emulate the Egyptians, and play with serpents. First he took out of its cage a Morocco venom-snake, put it round his neck, twisted it about, and

whirled it round about him. Happily for him it did not arouse itself so as to bite. The assistant-keeper cried out, "For God's sake put back the snake," but the foolish man replied, "I am inspired." Putting back the venom-snake, he exclaimed, "Now for the cobra." This deadly serpent was somewhat torpid with the cold of the previous night, and therefore the rash man placed it in his bosom till it revived, and glided downward till its head appeared below the back of his waistcoat. He took it by the body, about a foot from the head, and then seized it lower down by the other hand, intending to hold it by the tail and swing it round his head. He held it for an instant opposite to his face, and like a flash of lightning the serpent struck him between the eyes. The blood streamed down his face, and he called for help, but his companion fled in horror; and, as he told the jury, he did not know how long he was gone, for he was "in a maze." When assistance arrived Gurling was sitting on a chair, having restored the cobra to its place. He said, "I am a dead man." They put him in a cab, and took him to the hospital. First his speech went, he could only point to his poor throat and moan; then his vision failed him, and lastly his hearing. His pulse gradually sank, and in one hour from the time at which he had been struck he was a corpse. There was only a little mark upon the bridge of his nose, but the poison spread over the body, and he was a dead man. I tell you that story that you may use it as a parable and learn never to play with sin, and also in order to bring vividly before you what it is to be bitten by a serpent. Suppose that Gurling could have been cured by looking at a piece of brass, would it not have been good news for him? There was no remedy for that poor infatuated creature, but there is a remedy for you. For men who have been bitten by the fiery serpents of sin Jesus Christ is lifted up: not for you only who are as yet playing with the serpent, not for you only who have warmed it in your bosom, and felt it creeping over your flesh, but for you who are actually bitten, and are mortally wounded. If any man be bitten so that he has become diseased with sin, and feels the deadly venom in his blood, it is for him that Jesus is set forth to-day. Though he may think himself to be an extreme case, it is for such that sovereign grace provides a remedy.

The bite of the serpent was painful. We are told in the text that these serpents were "fiery" serpents, which may perhaps refer to their color, but more probably has reference to the burning effects of their venom. It heated and inflamed the blood so that every vein became a boiling river, swollen with anguish. In some men that poison of asps which we call sin has inflamed their minds. They are restless, discontented, and full of fear and anguish. They write their own damnation, they are sure that they are lost, they refuse all tidings of hope. You cannot get them to give a cool and sober hearing to the message of grace. Sin works in them such terror that they give themselves over as dead men. They are in their own apprehension, as David says, "free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom God remembers no more." It was for men bitten by the fiery serpents that the brazen serpent was lifted up, and it is for men actually envenomed by sin that Jesus is preached. Jesus died for such as are at their wits' ends: for such as cannot think straight, for those who are tumbled up and down in their minds, for those who are condemned already—for such was the Son of man lifted up upon the cross. What a comfortable thing that we are able to tell you this.

The bite of these serpents was, as I have told you, mortal. The Israelites could have no question about that, because in their own presence "much people of Israel died." They saw their own friends die of the snake-bite, and they helped to bury them. They knew why they died, and were sure that it was because the venom of the fiery serpents was in their veins. They were left without an excuse for imagining that they could be bitten and yet live. Now, we know that many have perished as the result of sin. We are not in doubt as to what sin will do, for we are told by

the infallible word, that "the wages of sin is death," and, yet again, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We know, also, that this death is endless misery, for the scripture describes the lost as being cast into outer darkness, "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." Our Lord Jesus speaks of the condemned going away into everlasting punishment, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. We ought to have no doubt about this, and the most of those who profess to doubt it are those who fear that it will be their own portion, who know that they are going down to eternal woe themselves, and therefore try to shut their eyes to their inevitable doom. Alas, that they should find flatterers in the pulpit who pander to their love of sin by piping to the same tune. We are not of their order. We believe in what the Lord has said in all its solemnity of dread, and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men to escape therefrom. But it was for men who had endured the mortal bite, for men upon whose pallid faces death began to set his seal, for men whose veins were burning with the awful poison of the serpent within them—for them it was that God said to Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live."

There is no limit set to the stage of poisoning: however far gone, the remedy still had power. If a person had been bitten a moment before, though he only saw a few drops of blood oozing forth, and only felt a little smart, he might look and live, and if he had waited, unhappily waited, even for half an hour, and speech failed him, and the pulse grew feeble, yet if he could but look he would live at once. No bound was set to the virtue of this divinely ordained remedy, or to the freedom of its application to those who needed it. The promise had no qualifying clause,—"It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live," and our text tells us that God's promise came to pass in every case, without exception, for we read—"It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten *any man,* when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Thus, then, I have described the person who was in mortal peril.

II. Secondly, let us consider *the remedy provided for him.* This was as singular as it was effectual. *It was purely of divine origin,* and it is clear that the invention of it, and the putting of power into it, was entirely of God. Men have prescribed several fomentations, decoctions, and operations for serpent bites: I do not know how far any of them may be depended upon, but this I know—I would rather not be bitten in order to try any of them, even those that are most in vogue. For the bites of the fiery serpents in the wilderness there was no remedy whatever, except this which God had provided, and at first sight that remedy must have seemed to be a very unlikely one. A simple look to the figure of a serpent on a pole—how unlikely to avail! How and by what means could a cure be wrought through merely looking at twisted brass? It seemed, indeed, to be almost a mockery to bid men look at the very thing which had caused their misery. Shall the bite of a serpent be cured by looking at a serpent? Shall that which brings death also bring life? But herein lay the excellency of the remedy, that it was of divine origin; for when God ordains a cure he is by that very fact bound to put potency into it. He will not devise a failure, nor prescribe a mockery. It should always be enough for us to know that God ordains a way of blessing us, for if he ordains, it must accomplish the promised result. We need not know *how* it will work, it is quite sufficient for us that God's mighty grace is pledged to make it bring forth good to our souls.

This particular remedy of a serpent lifted on a pole was *exceedingly instructive,* though I do not suppose that Israel understood it. We have been taught by our Lord and know the meaning. It was a serpent impaled upon a pole. As you would take a sharp pole and drive it through a serpent's head to kill it, so this brazen

serpent was exhibited as killed, and hung up as dead before all eyes. It was the image of a dead snake. Wonder of wonders that our Lord Jesus should condescend to be symbolized by a dead serpent. The instruction to us after reading John's gospel is this: our Lord Jesus Christ, in infinite humiliation, designed to come into the world, and to be made a curse for us. The brazen serpent had no venom of itself, but it took the form of a fiery serpent. Christ is no sinner, and in him is no sin. But the brazen serpent was in the form of a serpent; and so was Jesus sent forth by God "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He came under the law, and sin was imputed to him, and therefore he came under the wrath and curse of God for our sakes. In Christ Jesus, if you will look at him upon the cross, you will see that sin is slain and hung up as a dead serpent: there too is death put to death, for "he hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light:" and there also is the curse for ever ended because he has endured it, being "made a curse for us, as it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Thus are these serpents hung up upon the cross as a spectacle to all beholders, all slain by our dying Lord. Sin, death, and the curse are as dead serpents now. Oh, what a sight! If you can see it what joy it will give you. Had the Hebrews understood it, that dead serpent, dangling from a pole, would have prophesied to them the glorious sight which this day our faith gazes upon—Jesus slain, and sin, death, and hell slain in him. The remedy, then to be looked to was excedingly instructive, and we know the instruction it was intended to convey to us.

Please to recollect that in all the camp of Israel *there was but one remedy* for serpent-bite, and that was the brazen serpent; and there was but one brazen serpent, not two. Israel might not make another. If they had made a second it would have had no effect: there was one, and only one, and that was lifted high in the center of the camp, that if any man was bitten by a serpent he might look to it and live. There is one Savior, and only one. There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." All grace is concentrated in Jesus, of whom we read, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Christ's bearing the curse and ending the curse, Christ's being slain by sin and destroying sin, Christ bruised as to his heel by the old serpent, but breaking the serpent's head,—it is Christ alone that we must look to if we would live. O sinner, look to Jesus on the cross, for he is the one remedy for all forms of sin's poisoned wounds.

There was but one healing serpent, and that one was *bright and lustrous.* It was a serpent of brass, and brass is a shining metal. This was newly-made brass, and therefore not dimmed, and whenever the sun shone, there flashed forth a brightness from this brazen serpent. It might have been a serpent of wood or of any other metal, if God had so ordained; but he commanded that it must be of brass, that it might have a brightness about it. What a brightness there is about our Lord Jesus Christ! If we do but exhibit him in his own true metal he is lustrous in the eyes of men. If we will but preach the gospel simply, and never think to adorn it with our philosophical thought, there is enough brightness in Christ to catch a sinner's eye, aye, and it does catch the eyes of thousands. From afar the everlasting gospel gleams in the person of Christ. As the brazen standard reflected the beams of the sun, so Jesus reflects the love of God to sinners, and seeing it they look by faith and live.

Once more, this remedy was *an enduring one.* It was a serpent of brass, and I suppose it remained in the midst of the camp from that day forward. There was no use for it after Israel entered Canaan, but as long as they were in the wilderness, it was probably exhibited in the center of the camp, hard by the tabernacle door, upon a lofty standard. Aloft and open to the gaze of all hung this image of a dead snake—the perpetual cure for serpent venom. Had it been made of other materials it might have been broken, or have decayed, but a serpent of brass would last as long

as fiery serpents pestered the desert camp. As long as there was a man bitten there was the serpent of brass to heal him. What a comfort is this, that Jesus is still able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. The dying thief beheld the brightness of that serpent of brass as he saw Jesus hanging at his side, and it saved him; and so may you and I look and live, for he is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

"Faint my head, and sick my heart,
Wounded, bruis'd, in every part,
Satan's fiery sting I feel
Poison'd with the pride of hell:
But if at the point to die,
Upward I direct mine eye,
Jesus lifted up I see,
Live by him who died for me."

I hope I do not overlay my subject by these figures. I wish not to do so, but to make it very plain to you. All you that are really guilty, all you who are bitten by the serpent, the sure remedy for you is to look to Jesus Christ, who took our sin upon himself, and died in the sinner's stead, "being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Your only remedy lies in Christ, and nowhere else. Look unto him and be ye saved.

III. This brings us, in the third place, to consider *the application of the remedy,* or the link between the serpent-bitten man and the brass serpent which was to heal him. What was the link? It was of the most simple kind imaginable. The brazen serpent might have been, if God had so ordered it, carried into the house where the sick man was, but it was not so. It might have been applied to him by rubbing: he might have been expected to repeat a certain form of prayer, or to have a priest present to perform a ceremony, but there was nothing of the kind; he had only to look. It was well that the cure was so simple for the danger was so frequent. Bites of the serpent came in many ways; a man might be gathering sticks, or merely walking along, and be bitten. Even now in the desert serpents are a danger. Mr. Sibree says that on one occasion he saw what he thought to be a round stone, beautifully marked. He put forth his hand to take it up, when to his horror he discovered that it was a coiled-up living serpent. All the day long when fiery serpents were sent among them the Israelites must have been in danger. In their beds and at their meals,—in their houses and when they went abroad, they were in danger. These serpents are called by Isaiah "flying serpents," not because they do fly, but because they contract themselves and then suddenly spring up, so as to reach to a considerable height, and a man might be well buskined and yet not be beyond the reach of one of these malignant reptiles. What was a man to do? He had nothing to do but to stand outside his tent door, and look to the place where gleamed afar the brightness of the serpent of brass, and the moment he looked he was healed. He had nothing to do but to look,—no priest was wanted, no holy water, no hocus-pocus, no mass-book, nothing but a look. A Romish bishop said to one of the early Reformers, when he preached salvation by simple faith, "O Mr. Doctor, open that gap to the people and we are undone." And so indeed they are, for the business and trade of priestcraft are ended for ever if men may simply trust Jesus and live. Yet it is even so. Believe in him, ye sinners, for this is the spiritual meaning of looking, and at once your sin is forgiven, and what perhaps is more, its deadly power ceases to operate within your spirit. There is life in a look at Jesus; is not this simple enough?

But please to notice how *very personal* it was. A man could not be cured by anything anybody else could do for him. If he had been bitten by the serpent and had refused to look to the serpent of brass, and had gone to his bed, no physician could help him. A pious mother might kneel down and pray for him, but it would be of no use. Sisters might come in and plead, ministers might be called in to pray that the man might live; but he must die despite their prayers if he did not look. There was only one hope for his life—*he must look to that serpent of brass.* It is just so with you. Some of you have written to me begging me to pray for you: so I have, but it avails nothing unless you yourselves believe in Jesus Christ. There is not beneath the cope of heaven, nor in heaven, any hope for any one of you unless you will believe in Jesus Christ. Whoever you may be, however much bitten of the serpent, and however near to die, if you will look to the Savior you shall live; but if you will not do this you must be damned, as surely as you live. As the last great day I must bear witness against you that I have told you this straight out and plainly. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be damned." There is no help for it; you may do what you will, join what church you please, take the Lord's Supper, be baptized, go through severe penances, or give all your goods to feed the poor, but you are a lost man unless you look to Jesus, for this is the one remedy; and even Jesus Christ himself cannot, will not, save you unless you look to him. There is nothing in his death to save you, there is nothing in his life to save you, unless you will trust him. It has come to this, *you must look,* and look for yourself.

And then, again, it is *very instructive.* This looking, what did it mean? It meant this—self-help must be abandoned, and God must be trusted. The wounded man would say, "I must not sit here and look at my wound, for that will not save me. See there where the serpent struck me, the blood is oozing forth, black with the venom! How it burns and swells! My very heart is failing. But all these reflections will not ease me. I must look away from this to the uplifted serpent of brass." It is idle to look anywhere except to God's one ordained remedy. The Israelities must have understood as much as this, that God requires us to trust him, and to use his means of salvation. We must do as he bids us, and trust in him to work our cure; and if we will not do this we shall die eternally.

This way of curing was intended that they might magnify the love of God, and attribute their healing entirely to divine grace. The brazen serpent was not merely a picture, as I have shown you, of God's putting away sin by spending his wrath upon his Son, but it was a display of divine love. And this I know because Jesus himself said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son": plainly saying that the death of Christ upon the cross was an exhibition of God's love to men; and whosoever looks to that grandest display of God's love to man, namely, his giving his only-begotten Son to become a curse for us, shall surely live. Now, when a man was healed by looking at the serpent he could not say that he healed himself; for he only looked, and there is no virtue in a look. A believer never claims merit or honor on account of his faith. Faith is a self-denying grace, and never dares to boast. Where is the great credit of simply believing the truth, and humbly trusting Christ to save you? Faith glorifies God, and so our Lord has chosen it as the means of our salvation. If a priest had come and touched the bitten man he might have ascribed some honor to the priest; but when there was no priest in the case, when there was nothing except looking to that brazen serpent, the man was driven to the conclusion that God's love and power had healed him. I am not saved by anything that I have done, but by what the Lord has done. To that con-

clusion God will have us all come; we must all confess that if saved it is by his free, rich, sovereign, undeserved grace displayed in the person of his dear Son.

IV. Allow me one moment upon the fourth head, which is *the cure effected.* We are told in the text that "if a serpent had bitten any man, *when* he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived;" that is to say, *he was healed at once.* He had not to wait five minutes, nor five seconds. Dear hearer, did you ever hear this before? If you have not, it may startle you, but it is true. If you have lived in the blackest sin that is possible up to this very moment, yet if you will now believe in Jesus Christ you shall be saved before the clock ticks another time. It is done like a flash of lightning; pardon is not a work of time. Sanctification needs a lifetime, but justification needs no more than a moment. Thou believest, thou livest. Thou dost trust to Christ, thy sins are gone, thou art a saved man the instant thou believest. "Oh," saith one, "that is a wonder." It is a wonder, and will remain a wonder to all eternity. Our Lord's miracles when he was on earth were mostly instantaneous. He touched them and the fevered ones were able to sit up and minister to him. No doctor can cure a fever in that fashion, for there is a resultant weakness left after the heat of the fever is abated. Jesus works perfect cures, and whosoever believeth in him, though he hath only believed one minute, is justified from all his sins. Oh the matchless grace of God!

This remedy healed again and again. Very possibly after a man had been healed he might go back to his work, and be attacked by a second serpent, for there were broods of them about. What had he to do? Why, to look again, and if he was wounded a thousand times he must look a thousand times. You, dear child of God, if you have sin on your conscience, look to Jesus. The healthiest way of living where serpents swarm is never to take your eye off the brazen serpent at all. Ah, ye vipers, ye may bite if ye will; as long as my eye is upon the brazen serpent I defy your fangs and poison-bags, for I have a continual remedy at work within me. Temptation is overcome by the blood of Jesus. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith."

This cure was of universal efficacy to all who used it. There was not one case in all the camp of a man that looked to the serpent of brass and yet died, and there never will be a case of a man that looks to Jesus who remains under condemnation. The believer *must* be saved. Some of the people had to look from a long distance. The pole could not be equally near to everybody, but so long as they could see the serpent it healed those that were afar off as well as those who were nigh. Nor did it matter if their eyes were feeble. All eyes were not alike keen; and some may have had a squint, or a dimness of vision, or only one eye, but if they did but look they lived. Perhaps the man could hardly make out the shape of the serpent as he looked. "Ah," he said to himself, "I cannot discern the coils of the brazen snake, but I can see the shining of the brass;" and he lived. Oh, poor soul, if thou canst not see the whole of Christ nor all his beauties, nor all the riches of his grace, yet if thou canst but see him who was made sin for us thou shalt live. If thou sayest, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," thy faith will save thee; a little faith will give thee a great Christ, and thou shalt find eternal life in him.

Thus I have tried to describe the cure. Oh that the Lord would work that cure in every sinner here at this moment! I do pray he may.

It is a pleasant thought that if they looked to that brazen serpent by any kind of light they lived. Many beheld it in the glare of noon, and saw its shining coils, and lived; but I should not wonder that some were bitten at night, and by the moonlight they drew near and looked up and lived. Perhaps it was a dark and stormy night, and not a star was visible. The tempest crashed overhead, and from the murky cloud out flashed the lightning, cleaving the rocks asunder. By the glare of that

sudden flame the dying man made out the brazen serpent, and though he saw but for a moment yet he lived. So, sinner, if your soul is wrapped in tempest, and if from out the cloud there comes but one single flash of light, look to Jesus Christ by it and you shall live.

V. I close with this last matter of consideration: here is *a lesson for those who love their Lord.* What ought we to do? We should imitate Moses, whose business it was to set the brazen serpent upon a pole. It is your business and mine to lift up the gospel of Christ Jesus, so that all may see it. All Moses had to do was to hang up the brazen serpent in the sight of all. He did not say, "Aaron, bring your censer, and bring with you a score of priests, and make a perfumed cloud." Nor did he say, "I myself will go forth in my robes as lawgiver, and stand there." No, he had nothing to do that was pompous or ceremonial, he had but to exhibit the brass serpent and leave it naked and open to the gaze of all. He did not say, "Aaron, bring hither a cloth of gold, wrap up the serpent in blue and scarlet and fine linen." Such an act would have been clean contrary to his orders. He was to keep the serpent unveiled. Its power lay in itself, and not in its surroundings. The Lord did not tell him to paint the pole, or to deck it with the colors of the rainbow. Oh, no, Any pole would do. The dying ones did not want to see the pole, they only needed to behold the serpent. I dare say he would make a neat pole, for God's work should be done decently, but still the serpent was the sole thing to look at. This is what we have to do with our Lord. We must preach *him,* teach *him,* and make *him* visible to all. We must not conceal him by our attempts at eloquence and learning. We must have done with the polished lancewood pole of fine speech, and those bits of scarlet and blue, in the form of grand sentences and poetic periods. Everything must be done that Christ may be seen, and nothing must be allowed which hides him. Moses may go home and go to bed when the serpent is once uplifted. All that is wanted is that the brazen serpent should be within view both by day and night. The preacher may hide himself, so that nobody may know who he is, for if he has set forth Christ he is best out of the way.

Now, you teachers, teach your children Jesus. Show them Christ crucified. Keep Christ before them. You young men that try to preach, do not attempt to do it grandly. The true grandeur of preaching is for Christ to be grandly displayed in it. No other grandeur is wanted. Keep self in the background, but set forth Jesus Christ among the people, evidently crucified among them. None but Jesus, none but Jesus. Let him be the sum and substance of all your teaching.

Some of you have looked to the brazen serpent, I know, and you have been healed, but what have you done with the brazen serpent since? You have not come forward to confess your faith and join the church. You have not spoken to any one about his soul. You put the brazen serpent into a chest and hide it away. Is this right? Bring it out, and set it on a pole. Publish Christ and his salvation. He was never meant to be treated as a curiosity in a museum; he is intended to be exhibited in the highways that those who are sin-bitten may look at him. "But, I have no proper pole," says one. The best sort of pole to exhibit Christ upon is a high one, so that he may be seen the further. Exalt Jesus. Speak well of his name. I do not know any other virtue that there can be in the pole but its height. The more you can speak in your Lord's praise, the higher you can lift him up the better, but for all other styles of speech there is nothing to be said. Do lift Christ up. "Oh," says one, "but I have not a long standard." Then lift him up on such as you have, for there are short people about who will be able to see by your means. I think I told you once of a picture which I saw of the brazen serpent. I want the Sunday-school teachers to listen to this. The artist represented all sorts of people clustering round the pole, and as they looked the horrible snakes dropped off their

arms, and they lived. There was such a crowd around the pole that a mother could not get near it. She carried a little babe, which a serpent had bitten. You could see the blue marks of the venom. As she could get no nearer, the mother held her child aloft, and turned its little head that it might gaze with its infant eye upon the brazen serpent and live. Do this with your little children, you Sunday-school teachers. Even while they are yet little, pray that they may look to Jesus Christ and live; for there is no bound set to their age. Old men snake-bitten came hobbling on their crutches. "Eighty years old am I," saith one, "but I have looked to the brazen serpent, and I am healed." Little boys were brought out by their mothers, though as yet they could hardly speak plainly, and they cried in child language, "I look at the great snake and it bless me." All ranks, and sexes, and characters, and dispositions looked and lived. Who will look to Jesus at this good hour? O dear souls, will you have life or no? Will you despise Christ and perish? If so, your blood be on your own skirts. I have told you God's way of salvation, lay hold on it. Look to Jesus at once. May his Spirit gently lead you so to do. Amen.

[This discourse when it shall be printed will make fifteen hundred of my sermons which have been published regularly week by week. This is certainly a remarkable fact. I do not know of any instance in modern times in which fifteen hundred sermons have thus followed each other from the press from one person, and have continued to command a large circle of readers. I desire to utter most hearty thanksgivings to God for divine help in thinking out and uttering these sermons,—sermons which have not merely been printed, but have been *read* with eagerness, and have also been translated into foreign tongues; sermons which are publicly read on this very Sabbath day in hundreds of places where a minister cannot be found; sermons which God has blessed to the conversion of multitudes of souls. I may and I must joy and rejoice in this great blessing which I most heartily ascribe to the undeserved favor of the Lord. I thought the best way in which I could express my thankfulness would be to preach Jesus Christ again, and set him forth in a sermon in which the simple gospel should be made as clear as a child's alphabet. I hope that in closing the list of fifteen hundred discourses the Lord will give me a word which will be blessed more than any which have preceded it, to the conversion of those who hear it or read it. May those who sit in darkness because they do not understand the freeness of salvation and the easy method by which it may be obtained, be brought into the light by discovering the way of peace through believing in Christ Jesus. Forgive this comment; my thankfulness would not permit me to withhold it.—Delivered at Metropolitan Tabernacle, Sunday morning, Oct. 19, 1879.]

"THREE FIRES."

R. A. TORREY.

The following is a report of the discourse with which Dr. Torrey closed his series of Exhibition sermons in Australia.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.—Matt. iii: 11.

FIRST FIRE.

This came to me in a peculiar way. I had just moved from one house into another in Chicago. Sitting, tired, at the close of a hard day, I picked up a leaflet, and my eye rested on the headline: "Wanted, a Baptism with Fire." Said I, That's just what I want. One verse quoted kept ringing through my heart: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Next day I could hear this verse sounding out through all my work. Saturday night came—a night on which I always attended a prayer-meeting in the vestry of my church. I said to the janitor before the meeting commenced: "It is written, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The janitor smiled a meaning sort of smile, and I thought, "he knows more about this than the parson." A stranger from London was to preach for me the following Sunday morning, and I in the evening. I asked the Lord for a text for evening, and could get nothing but this verse: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." This didn't seem to me like an evening text—I had been accustomed to address believers in the morning, and the unconverted at night. Then two more texts came to me, both with fire in them. I preached, and in the after-meeting powers unseen came upon the congregation, and we had a great outpouring of the Spirit. I have since met people all over the world who were in my church that night, and recalled the memory of it to me. Not long ago a lady in China spoke to me of it. I am going to take the same subject and lines tonight.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. This first fire, then, is the fire of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ baptized his disciples with the Holy Spirit and with fire. We all know what it is to baptize with water, by sprinkling, pouring or immersion. But this is a baptism with fire. What does this fire mean? What is fire said in the Bible to do? What happened to the disciples at Pentecost? We read that they were all with one accord in one place, waiting to be endued with power from on high. Suddenly there came a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and there descended on each a cloven tongue like as of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The tongues symbolized the baptism of fire. The symbol may have departed, but the reality remains. The promise is to you and to your children.

When I first preached this sermon, I said to God the night before: "How can I preach what I have not got?" I went on my knees before him, and waited. I got such a revelation of myself as I never had before of my meanness, selfishness, and self-seeking. Christian men and women, don't we need that now? It is not a pleasant revelation, but it is a salutary one.

Fire refines and purifies (Mal. 3). Water washes the outside: fire cleanses in-

ternally. Throw a piece of gold into the fire, and all the alloy, the dross in it, will be consumed. The dirt on the outside of our lives we can get rid of by outward reformation; but the alloy, the sin, down deep in our hearts—how shall we get it off? The baptism of the Holy Ghost will refine a man in five minutes. It is a slow process getting rid of our sins in any other way, but a baptism of fire does it at once.

"Fire consumes (Ezekiel xxiv. 4-11). We need burning out of our love of money, our love of the world, our desire for men's applause, our looking at newspapers for reports of our sayings and doings, our fear of man, our selfish ambition, our desire to be in the forefront, our stubborn obstinacy. And this baptism of fire will do it for us tonight. I knew a young woman who professed to be a Christian, though many doubted it; in fact, she sometimes doubted it herself. She was stubborn, proud, loud, obstinate—everything a Christian ought not to be. She was a member of our church Bible Institute, of which her uncle was president. Every Bible Institute member is required to go out among the poor, and help them to Christ. One day this girl had been out, and was tired. She walked along the Lake Shore drive, and noted the beautiful homes along its course. "Ah!" she said to herself, "this is what I like; I have had enough of dirty old stairways and squalor!" She went home fighting against the Holy Spirit. At the tea table, all in a moment, the Holy Ghost and fire fell upon her. In an instant she ran across the room, threw her arms around a girl friend who was staying with her, and exclaimed, "I'm a volunteer for South Africa." The fire of the Lord had burnt up everything evil in her heart and life. So transformed was she henceforth in her views, purposes, ambitions, nay, in her very face, that her best and closest friends could hardly believe she was the same girl. Isn't that what you need? You have an unconverted husband, perhaps; seek for this baptism of fire so as to cleanse and transform you that he may be won, by the change, to accept your Master as his.

Fire illuminates. All light comes from fire. Daylight is the effect of the combustion caused by the sun. A baptism of fire—the fire of the Holy Spirit—will do more to deliver a man from heresy than a theological education. Let a man be baptized with this fire, and all "Higher Criticism," theosophy, agnosticism, skepticism, at once goes away. This baptism of fire makes the Bible a new book, with a glory gilding every page. Before a man gets this baptism, he would rather read the last new novel, ay, or even an old almanac, than the Bible. But when he gets this baptism, he will grudge every moment given to any other study. The young girl I spoke of just now came to me after the great change had been undergone, and said, "Do you know what has happened to me? The best thing about it is that the Bible, which to me used to be the dullest of books, is now the sweetest. God shows me something new every day in the Bible!" The whole Bible Institute was stirred by the marvelous change in this girl. Ah! my friends, what you all need, and what we preachers need, is the baptism of fire!

Fire warms. You stand over a glowing furnace with a bar of iron. It is cold and dark. But plunge it into the fire and note the rapid change. It was cold and hard, but now it is malleable, red hot, at a white heat! How cold we preachers are! But let God take us and plunge us in the fire of the Holy Ghost, and we glow with love for him and love for perishing souls. Yes, our great need today is the baptism of fire. We preachers come out with solid arguments and beautiful illustrations. We convince the intellect, but we don't melt the will. We need to be preachers on fire! Wesley, Whitefield, Brainerd, Moody, were on fire; and when we get on fire all Australia will be melted. We need a choir on fire! This choir sings beautifully, and you applaud it heartily. But when our choir gets the baptism of fire, you will not applaud, but burst into tears.

We need church members on fire! Then strangers visiting our churches would not be frozen to death. Why doesn't the workingman go to church? Why? Be-

cause he doesn't like a refrigerator! If the workingman found the rich man all aglow with love to God and man, he'd come to church fast enough!

Fire begets energy. Men of science tell us that, given heat, we can generate energy. What generates power in the engine? The fire in the fire-box. A man shows me an engine capable of doing any amount of driving, and yet there is nothing moving. Why? He takes me below and shows me the fire-box empty. It wants fire and without that fire all its elaborate and splendid mechanism is powerless and valueless. I go into some of your churches. What splendid frescoes! What elaborately carved seats! What an effective choir! What a capable minister, with the diction of an Addison and the elocution of a Burke! What perfect organization! What a large and well-arranged Y. P. S. C. E.! Look around, and with all this grandeur, there is not a wheel in the whole instrument moving for the glory and kingdom of God! There is no fire there! What we need is the fire of the Holy Ghost. When the church gets on its face before God, and cries out for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the fire will come, and a great work will be done.

Fire spreads. In 1871, an old woman, known as Mother O'Leary, was one day milking a cow in Chicago, with a lamp on the ground beside her. The cow kicked the lamp over, the grass ignited, the flames spread, and in forty-eight hours only two buildings were left standing in that part of Chicago. Yes, fire spreads; but no fire spreads like the fire of the Holy Ghost. If we get a great baptism of fire on this Mission, it will sweep right through Australia, India and Africa. Jesus Christ baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire. These ministers around me can baptize with water, by sprinkling, affusion, or immersion, according to the applicants' desire and their respective practice; but only the Holy Spirit can baptize with fire. John baptized with water, so do my brethren here, and so do I; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and he is here waiting to do it.

SECOND FIRE.

I base this portion of my address on 1 Corinthians iii. 15: "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." The fire of God is going to try the work of every professing Christian. I come with a message to you that your work will be tried by fire. This church work, so-called, of fairs, festivities and tomfooleries, degrading the church to the level of a museum or a vaudeville, will it stand God's test, think you? No, it will go up like smoke. Good sermons, perhaps sermons that convert some, but preached for men's applause, will they stand God's test? No, they will go up like smoke. Solos, sung in the sweetest and best voice and style, but sung only for applause, will they stand God's test, as work for him? No, they will go up in smoke. I had two leading lady singers in my church choir, one of whom came to me, after I had preached this sermon there, and said, "I never sang a solo purely for God's glory; I want this baptism of fire." They both got it, and became missionaries. I lost them, of course, from the choir, and I wish I could lose the whole of this great choir here tonight in the same way. All of you here in this hall who are working for Christ, will your work stand? Has it an unmixed motive?

THIRD FIRE.

What this is may be found from 2 Thessalonians i. 7-9: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." This is the fire of eternal doom. Everyone here must know the fire from God, either the glowing baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the fire consuming imperfect, mixed-motived works, or the fire of everlasting doom. Many here have experienced the first, as all may, if they will; some will experience the second; and some, it is to be feared, the third.

I hear some one say, "Is this fire of doom a literal fire?" For the sake of argument, I will let you take it as figurative; but remember, God's figures stand for facts, and his figures do not overstate his facts. Then what agonies must be those which can be compared to "smoke of torment ascending forever and ever?"

No exegesis can read out from the Bible the doctrine of endless punishment for those rejecting the Gospel of Christ. Did you ever burn yourself seriously? If so, you know the pain it brings. Now, think of such suffering enduring year after year, century after century, æon after æon, even to the ages of ages! Shallow thinkers say, "Oh, this can't be true!" But don't you see men suffering here year after year, with no hope, if they reject the Gospel? If the day comes when repentance is impossible, what remains but an endless hell? You say you can't believe it. Your belief or not belief does not alter God's fact. The Christian Scientist says there is no such thing as pain; but you stick a pin in him, and see what he will say then. Remember, you don't get rid of a fact by denying it.

For whom is this doom? For them that know not God. A man tells me he is an agnostic—he does not know. Well, know not is English; agnostic, Greek; and ignoramus, Latin. Let him take his choice.

Jesus Christ will render vengeance. You say, this is not just. But it is a fact and it is just. You ought to know God. You have resisted every attempt to bring you to know him. You have put yourself under infidel influence; you have listened to blasphemous, obscene teaching. You ought to know God. It is your first and most solemn duty and obligation. If you are an honest and pure-mouthed agnostic, you can get rid of your trouble. I will show you how, if you will come to me after this meeting.

"And that obey not the Gospel." Many a man theoretically believes the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, but does not "obey the Gospel." He will have the same fate as the agnostic.

All here must take choice between these three fires I have spoken of. Which do you choose?

[After a solemn pause, Dr. Torrey offered an earnest prayer. He then asked those Christians present who had been working with imperfect or mixed motive, and were resolved to pursue a single aim in the future, to come forward, and so many rose to do so that after a minute or two he had to request them to stand where they had risen. He then desired all who wished for a full and immediate baptism of the Holy Spirit to rise, and an immense number sprang to their feet. Finally he begged all who were willing to accept Christ as their Savior to go into the inquiry room and, while a hymn was being sung, a large number complied with his invitation and were personally dealt with by Dr. Torrey and a large band of ministers and other Christian workers.]

CHRIST POINTS OUT TO US THE GATE OF LIFE

C. J. VAUGHAN, D.D.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.— Matt. vii: 13, 14.

The divine sermon draws to its close. It has explained the nature of that character to which Christ calls men, and of that blessedness to which he invites them. The law given from Sinai has been in part interpreted, in part superseded, by the new law given from the mountain in Galilee, under circumstances and amidst scenes how different! At last it has reached that comprehensive summary of all relative duty, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

And there we might say that the sermon ends, so far as its instructions are concerned. It remains only to urge men to enter in through the gate thus opened, and to caution them against some seducing influences (without and within) which might disappoint their hope of a final entrance into the everlasting kingdom of their Lord and Savior.

These are our two remaining subjects.

And first, there is a call to men to enter in through the gate which Christ points out.

If we find anything discouraging in some of the thoughts here suggested, let us not forget that first word, *Enter ye in.* It is not to daunt, it is to incite us, that the holy and merciful Savior speaks to us thus.

What is the parable which he proposes to us?

In the far distance there are two gates.

City-gates they are. Inside each, placed as each is in a city wall, there is, hidden from view, a dwelling-place, a collection of human habitations, a city of many mansions. We cannot see within: all is mystery, all is obscurity: the wall hides, the gate intercepts the view.

One of these two gates is wide and ample. It seems to invite access, to promise admission. Many could enter it at one time. Judged by this token, the city within it might seem to be the larger and the more magnificent.

The other gate is strait and confined. It is rather a postern or wicket-gate. It looks, in the distance, as though it would scarcely admit one man; as though the city behind must be poor, incommodious and unattractive.

And to each of these gates there leads a corresponding way.

Toward the wide gate there stretches a broad road. There is ample room upon it for all travelers; and many are in sight at one time, passing commodiously and at their ease along it.

Toward the strait gate there extends a narrow pathway, difficult to find, as well as hard to keep: it winds over mountain sides, along abrupt precipices, here and there across precarious morasses: and if you ask for companions on the journey,

they are few and rare in comparison with the passengers by the broad way and towards the wide gate.

Nevertheless, inside that wide gate is *destruction,* perdition, the loss of the soul, the casting away of the man himself: not brightness, but dim darkness; not happiness, not contentment, not honor nor rest nor peace; but rather misery and suffering; shame too, as the prophet writes, *shame and everlasting contempt.*

And inside that strait gate, which seemed, at a distance, to promise nothing—at the end of that narrow way which seemed, in the prospect, to lead to nothing—there is that which Jesus Christ calls *life;* that true, that real being—that expansion of every power and every faculty in a congenial climate and in a corresponding sphere—which for the first time makes a man feel and know that he lives; which makes existence, often before a drag and a yoke, an ecstasy and a delight; which calls into vigorous exercise every capacity of happiness, and which stretches forth in prospect into an unlimited duration; inasmuch as it has this characteristic, that it is a life with God and in God, incapable therefore of limit as of change, because they who dwell there, *in the high and holy place,* dwell there with *the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.*

The broad way and the wide gate lead to destruction: the narrow way and the strait gate lead to life—eternal life.

Enter ye in then *at the strait gate.*

St. Luke says, *Strive to enter in:* struggle, wrestle, contend earnestly, to enter in. It is a work of difficulty: it demands toil and pains.

For what is it? What is this entering in? What does it involve?

1. It involves, first, *a willingness to stand alone.*

We are all, by nature, creatures of imitation. For one person who leads, thousands follow. And even the person who leads has followed some one. No man enters this world as a unit; as a being whose life is altogether detached and severed from all around and from all before him. It ought not to be so. A man must be an unloving, unamiable, unnatural man, to make it so. We ought to be influenced, and we must influence.

In indifferent things, in all matters of mere outward custom and fashion, to be singular is to be foolish. It shows a care about trifles, which is unmanly; or else a desire to be noticed, which is a vanity.

And in all things connected with the life of this world—its trades and professions, its arts and sciences—a man must imitate if he would learn. Learning is imitation. To be original, for all except the one man in a million, is to be conceited and to be wrong.

But when we come to things of the soul, to questions of duty and to questions of religion, then a man ought to be not only independent but alone. *To his own Master he standeth or falleth.* It is not enough to be able to say, if indeed it could ever be said with truth, Every one says this; every one does this. That is not the question. The question is only, What is true? and what is right?

And our Lord here warns us that the common opinion and common practice of men, in the things of the soul, is not only an insufficient, but is even a fatal guide, for such as would be saved. It is the way to destruction, he tells us, which is crowded. It is of the wide gate that he says, *many there be which go in thereat.*

It is not until we deeply ponder the question that we perceive, any of us, how little of this independence we possess, even in the things of the soul.

We take our religion, most of us, at second hand. From our parents, from our teachers, from our friends—from the current ideas, the popular notions, of our contemporaries and countrymen—not from reflection, not from conscience, not from the Bible, not from God himself through Christ by the Spirit—do we derive that little

system, poor and unstable and precarious as it is, which serves as our creed while we live, our hope when we die.

Now it is plain that this is one reason why it is difficult to enter in at the strait gate.

To do this, a man must be willing, if necessary, to stand alone.

I do not mean that a man is to frame for himself an eccentric religion, and to conclude that he must be wrong in anything in which he is not singular. This would be the root of all heresy and of all schism. The faith in which he should live and die, if it is to be the true faith, must be the *faith once for all delivered to the saints,* and written down for us in the pages of God's Holy Scriptures.

But this I mean: that every one's religion must be made his own; that he must have a personal hold upon Revelation and the Gospel; that he must know for himself whom he has believed, and why; that he must try everything within; that he must find his own faith satisfactory to his own soul; and that he must carry out his own faith consistently in his own life.

In trying emergencies we are deserted by a religion of hearsay. When there is something painful to be borne—when we have to do something, or refuse something, which is a matter of life and death in its consequences—then we are left as a mariner without his compass, if we can only say, I thought this must be true because I was brought up to think it so; I was always told that there was a God, and therefore I believed, and therefore I worshiped. Yes; but did you ever try whether there was a God, by asking him for things, and expecting him to answer? by calling upon him till he heard, and receiving help from him according to your need? If not, you are still destitute of this power to stand alone, which is the first attribute of such as shall be saved.

And certainly in the great emergency of all we shall want this. In death it will be a poor consolation to say, I know of this person and that who believed in Christ: the question will be, hast thou tried him? for thyself? in life's joys for sobering, in life's sorrows for comfort? then, then only, canst thou hope in him and rest in him now.

The multitude throng the broad way: he who would enter into life must be willing, if need be, to walk alone.

2. Again, to enter in at the strait gate requires *a resolute purpose and a submissive will.*

(1) We shall never enter in unless we keep the gate in view.

It is implied in the parable that the gate of life is less conspicuous than the other.

Many an eye is caught by the wide ample portal which forms the terminus of the broad commodious way. But the narrow gate is in danger of being overlooked in the distance, even as the path which leads to it lies, in part, out of sight.

It is so in the thing signified. We must keep the gate in view, or we shall never reach it. We must see whither we are going, or we shall certainly not keep the way.

How few men are really bent upon being safe at last; upon entering into life, upon reaching heaven!

Nearer objects we all have. We can work for an earthly prize. We can *rise early and late take rest* for the wages of this world; for a maintenance, or for a fortune; for something which is to gratify vanity or reward ambition: but the narrow wicket-gate in the far distance—who can see it? who earnestly makes for it?

It was a great sin in the Israelites of old, that *they thought scorn of that pleasant land* which God promised them. How is it with us? What resolute purpose is there in any of us to reach heaven at all hazards? I doubt whether we even remember

to pray for it. For deliverance from some pressing anxiety by the way—for daily bread and nightly safety—we can ask for these things: it is well if we *ask* even for them: but for a happy entrance within the gate of life, for a safe admission into the heavenly city, who even prays? much more, who longs, or strives, or struggles?

We ought to fix in our minds, every one of us, by grace, the resolute purpose, cost what it may, to reach heaven.

(2) There is another thing: a submissive will. It is not enough to see the gate: we must also keep the way. And the way is hard to find. *Few there be that find it.* The direction of the road is not always obvious. It does not always seem to be the straightest way towards the destined end. It turns and winds, here and there, so that the wayfarer doubts his course. Sometimes it is steep as well as narrow; rough, and full of obstacles, as well as intricate and lonely. All this must be submitted to. A man who would reach the gate cannot choose his way: he must take what comes.

Is it not so in that which we speak of? in the way through this world to heaven?

How hard to find sometimes is the path of duty! Such ambiguous turns, such unsatisfactory windings; such questions arising between safe courses and enterprising, between rigidity and conciliation, between that which shall satisfy conscience and that which shall attract and possibly win souls: and besides these the more exceptional cases, such constant temptations to compromise, such incessant buffetings of inclination, such daily crossing of the will and mortifying of the affections: it is not always easy to find, and certainly it is rarely pleasant to keep, the way that leadeth unto life.

How discouraging oftentimes is the morning prayer, in the prospect of a day's trials! How dispiriting generally is the evening prayer, in the retrospect of a day's faults and falls! What wonder is it, if some who have begun a Christian life faint in it and are weary—if some even turn aside in the midst, and *walk no more with Jesus?* And what wonder, if many more, knowing by distant rumor the trials and troubles of the spiritual pilgrimage, put off, day by day and year by year, the work of beginning it; hope against hope that something may make them Christians some day, without their seeking; and that, though they neither see the gate nor keep the way, they may yet find themselves, when they die, inhabitants of the city within it?

3. Once more, and yet more distinctly, this entering in is difficult, because the things within the two gates are *beyond the view of sense. Destruction,* and *life:* what do we know, at present, of either?

We are here imprisoned each of us within a body of flesh and blood; imprisoned all of us together within a world of matter, of sense, of time. There is enough, within these prison walls, to occupy all our thoughts; sometimes with images of pain, and sometimes with images of pleasure. The cares of life are enough; the pleasures of life are enough; the affections of life, lawful and unlawful, are enough for this: what is left, either of understanding or of interest, when all these are provided for? Thus it comes to pass that most of us are practically unbelievers in that which we see not. Faith, the sight of the unseen, the spiritual apprehension of that which is to the senses invisible, may well be made, in Scripture, the one characteristic, the distinguishing attribute, of such as shall be saved.

Destruction, we say; what is that? A man losing himself, and being cast away? O, surely that can only be the doom (if it means what it seems to mean) of a few very wicked, very monstrous sinners! It cannot be the end of persons whose only fault has been that they lived by sight and not by faith; that they enjoyed the pleasures of common sin for a season: still less, of those who did many things that were good, and heard the Gospel gladly!

And *life—leadeth unto life:* what is that? I cannot understand the pleasure—

nay, I cannot catch the meaning—of a life altogether heavenly, a life lived in God, a life occupied wholly in seeing his face, uttering his praise, or performing his service. Surely there must be an excuse for me if I cannot as yet desire this; cannot set before myself as an object that which I understand not; cannot earnestly pursue that end which is to me unreal, visionary, transcendental!

And thus, to the difficulty which arises from our unwillingness to stand alone, and from our want of a resolute purpose and a submissive will, must be added this other and yet more fatal impediment—that we live in things which are seen, and cannot apprehend the very idea of the life of heaven and the life of God.

These few considerations will suffice to explain to us why the way of salvation is difficult. And now let us, in conclusion, lay to heart the solemn charge which bids us, nevertheless—notwithstanding the difficulty—at all risks, and at any cost, thus to enter in.

Enter ye in at the strait gate.

Then, if it be difficult, it is certainly not impossible.

With men it may be *impossible: but not with God.*

One thing is certain: that to this, above other subjects, applies the promise last dwelt upon, *Ask, and ye shall have.*

To enter in, we want nothing but the grace of God. Was that grace ever denied to prayer? Can any one say that he asks, asks earnestly, and asks on, yet receives not? receives not anything in answer?

The purpose of Jesus Christ, in everything which he says to us of the difficulty of being saved, is just this: that, showing us our inability to save ourselves, he may lead us to seek salvation as the free gift of God.

If he points to the multitudes who tread the broad way of indifference, self-indulgence, and sin, it is only to warn us of our danger, and to bring us to God for deliverance.

And in that coming to God—in that first coming—in that coming once—lies the chief part of the great work of salvation.

To go up to that glimmering light which indicates to us the first entrance of the way of life—to throw ourselves upon our knees there, as sinners wanting guidance, wanting help, wanting mercy—is all that we can do: blessed be God, it is all that he bids us to do: for he made us, he has watched us, and *he knoweth our frame.*

And he who, by grace, has done just this, is never quite the same man afterwards. He has entered into the presence of, into communication with, a real God: he has received, and he has acted upon, the first spark of grace: and if he will only stay there—still looking upward, still waiting for God—he will find himself guided, he scarcely knows how, into that path of which it is written that *wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein;* into that path, of which the same prophet has said, *Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it;* into that path, of which, on the whole, the onward course is comfort—of which, certainly, the last end is peace.

REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION.

D. L. MOODY.

Now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.—Acts xvii: 30.

Repentance is a subject that you have heard a great deal about. It is one of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

Repentance, of course, must come before the gospel. What John the Baptist was to Christ, that repentance is to the gospel. A man is not prepared to believe or to receive the gospel unless he is ready to repent of his sins and turn from them. Until John the Baptist met Christ he had but one test, "Repent! repent; repent! the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But if he had continued to say this, and had stopped there, without pointing the people a way to Christ the Lamb of God, he would not have accomplished much.

When Christ came he took up the same wilderness cry, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And when our Lord sent out his disciples it was with this message, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." After he had been glorified, and when the Holy Ghost came down, we find Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, raising the same cry, "Repent ye." It was this preaching—repent and believe the gospel—that wrought such marvelous results then. And we find that, when Paul went to Athens, he uttered the same cry, "Now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

But, before I speak of what repentance is, I want to take up the negative side a little, and say what it is not. Repentance is not fear. Many people have confounded fear with repentance. They think they have got to be alarmed and terrified, and they are waiting for that kind of fear to come down upon them. But multitudes become alarmed and get scared who do not repent. You have heard of men at sea during a terrible storm. Perhaps they were very profane men, but when the danger came, they suddenly grew quiet, and began to cry to God for mercy. Yet you would not say that was repentance. When the storm had passed away they went on swearing as before. You would think that the king of Egypt repented when God sent the terrible plagues upon him and his land. But it was not repentance at all. The moment God's hand was removed his heart was harder than before. He did not turn from one sin—he was the same man. So that there was no repentance there at all.

Once again, repentance is not fasting and afflicting the body. A man may fast at certain times for weeks and months and years, and yet not repent of one sin.

Neither is it remorse. Judas had terrible remorse—enough to make him go and hang himself; but that was not repentance. I believe if Judas had gone to his Lord and fallen on his face, and confessed his sin, he would have been forgiven. But he went to the priests, and then put an end to his life. He did not go to the Master and repent.

A man may do penance—but there is no true repentance in that. You cannot appease God by offering the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul. Away with such a delusion.

Repentance is not conviction of sin. That may sound strange to some of you. I have seen men under such deep conviction of sin that they could not sleep at night. They could not enjoy a single meal. They went on for months in this state, and yet they were not converted—they did not repent. Do not confound conviction of sin and repentance.

Another thing—it is not breaking off some one sin. A great many people make that mistake. A man who has been a drunkard signs the pledge, and stops drinking. That is all right, but sometimes the man who does this is so full of conceit that he condemns everyone else. I would about as soon see him full of whisky. Breaking off one sin is not repentance. It is like breaking off one limb of a tree, when the whole tree must be taken down. A profane man stops swearing. Very good; but if he does not break off from every sin it is not repentance—it is not the work of God in the soul. No, it is not breaking off this sin or that; it is turning from every sin—turning to God.

"Well, then," you will say, "what is repentance?" I will give you a good Bible definition: it is "right about face." "Turn ye, turn ye." A man may have little or much feeling, but if he do not turn away from sin God will not have mercy on him. It is also described as "a change of mind." For instance, there is the parable told by Christ in Matt. xxiv: A certain man had two sons. He said to the one, "Go out into my vineyard and work today." The boy said, "I will go." The father turns to the other boy, and bids him go also, but he says, "I won't." After he had said it, he thought over it and changed his mind. He was not only convinced that he was wrong, but he went off into the fields, hoeing or mowing, or whatever it was. That was Christ's definition of repentance. If a man says, "By the grace of God I will be good, and will do his will," that is repentance—a turning right about. Man is born with his face turned away from God. When he truly repents he is turned right round towards God: he leaves his old life.

Many people are waiting, they cannot exactly tell what for, but for some sort of miraculous feeling to come stealing over them—some mysterious kind of faith. I was speaking to a man in my own country some years ago, and he always had one answer to give me. He died only a few months since. For five years I tried to win him to Christ, and every year he said, "It has not struck me yet." "Man, what do you mean? What has not struck you?" I asked. "Well," he said, "I am not going to become a Christian until it strikes me, and it has not struck me yet. I do not see it in the way you see it." "But don't you know you are a sinner?" "Yes, I know I am a sinner." "Well, don't you know that God wants to have mercy on you—that there is forgiveness with God? He wants you to repent and come to him." "Yes, I know that, but—it has not struck me yet." He always fell back upon that. Poor man—he went down to his grave in August last. Six long years God gave him to repent, and all he had to say at the end of those years was that it had not struck him yet! Am I speaking to any here who are waiting for something, you do not know what—some strange feeling? Nowhere in the Bible is a man told to wait.

David made a woeful mistake with his rebellious son, Absalom. He could not have done his son a greater injustice than to forgive him when his heart was unchanged. There could be no true reconciliation between them when there was no repentance. But God does not make these mistakes. David soon got into trouble on account of it. His son began again to try and drive his father from the throne.

One thought more: Wherever God sees true repentance in the heart he meets that soul. I was in Colorado some time ago, and I heard something that touched my heart very much. The governor of the state was passing through the prison, and in one cell he found a boy who had his window full of plants, that seemed to have been watched with very tender care. The governor looked at the prisoner and then at the

plants, and asked whose they were. "These are my plants," said the poor convict. "Are you fond of plants?" "Yes, sir." "How long have you been here?" He told him so many years—he was in for a long sentence. The governor was surprised to find him so fond of the plants, and he said, "Why do you like these plants so much?" He replied, "When my mother lived she thought a good deal of plants, and when I came here I thought if I had these they would remind me of mother." The governor was so pleased that he said, "Well, young man, if you think so much of your mother, I think you will appreciate your liberty," and he pardoned him then and there. When God finds the plant of true repentance springing up in a man's heart, then salvation comes to that man. May God see it in many a heart here today!

FAITH IN GOD.

D. L. MOODY.

Heb. xi: 1.

There has been a great deal of discussion among Bible students as to which comes first, repentance or faith; I think sometimes they come together. Repentance may come first or faith, if men only have the two. But it is very important that we both repent and have faith in God. Let us pray God to help us understand what faith is; that is, true, saving faith. Now, the best definition I can find in the Bible is in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and the first verse: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is dependence on the word or veracity of another. Three things are necessary to make faith: knowledge, assent, and laying hold. There are a great many people who have the first two—they have a knowledge and they give their assent; but haven't got the third—they don't lay hold. Then a great many think faith is an inward looking to themselves. Faith is an outward look. Faith is the eye of the soul, looking out and trusting in God. A great many are making the mistake of measuring God by men. Beause men have deceived them and proved untrue to them, men in whom they have put their faith,

THEY PUT GOD IN THE SAME CATALOGUE,

and say they can't trust him. Now God never betrayed a trust yet. Nobody ever put his faith in God and was confounded. But the Lord has told us over and over again in scripture not to put faith in man. If men put faith in men, they will be deceived, but if they put faith in God they never will be disappointed. Now, it says in Jeremiah, the seventeenth chapter and the fifth verse: "Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited." How true that is! There is not a man whom the Lord God can bless, if he does not have faith. His heart will be like heath in the desert; it will be all dried up if it have no faith in it. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose

hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruits." The Lord does not want us to trust in man, or in the arms of flesh, or to trust in our own heart. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Now the question comes, will you have faith in your own heart, that has deceived you a thousand times, that is treacherous all through; or will you put your faith in God, who has never deceived you? Man has been deceived by himself and by others, but no man can

SAY GOD HAS DECEIVED HIM.

Let me read you the third verse of the one hundred and forty-sixth psalm: "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." A man who has faith in God, unbounded faith in God, God is his strength, God helps him in the time of trouble. Now Christ tells men whom to have faith in. In the eleventh chapter of Mark, it says, "Have faith in God." Did you ever find a man who had put his trust in God and came to trouble? In the very darkest hours that have come upon him there has always been a star of hope, because God has not left him. Now, turn over to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and there the apostle goes back to Abel, and goes along that line of holy men. There is Abel; there is Enoch, who walked with God; there is Noah, who walked also with God; there is Abraham, and the long line of men of faith. But when he gets into the twelfth chapter, he just takes our eye off those patriarchs and mighty men, and places it upon Jesus. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Now, it is not a faith which we are to have in a creed or dogma, but faith in a person. And that person is the Risen Man, sitting at the right hand of God—it is faith in the Son of God. There was nothing that pleased the Son of God on earth so much as faith. Faith can remove mountains, and there is

NOTHING EVEN NOW THAT PLEASES GOD

so much as faith to remove mountains. A great many men tell us that it does not matter what a man believes, if he is only sincere in his belief. I believe that theory came out of the pit of hell. My friend, what do you believe? Is it true? The truth always elevates; a lie always degrades. Why, those men on Mount Carmel were the most earnest men I ever heard of. They cried, "O Baal! O Baal!" I suppose you could have heard them miles off. Not only did they cry at the top of their voices, but they took knives and cut themselves, and they cried for hours. They were terribly in earnest; but there was no answer to their prayers. They couldn't bring down the fire to consume their sacrifice. It makes all the difference in the world, my friends, what we believe. The cry of the world is, "Be sincere in what you believe, and it is all right." And if the devil can only get you to believe a lie, and be sincere about it, that is all he wants. It makes all the difference whether we believe the truth or a lie. Two men were

GOING UP IN A BALLOON,

and one thought it was fastened in two different places, and he went and unfastened one cord, and to his great surprise the other was unfastened too. And one of the men got hold of the car, and was saved, and the other got hold of the rope, and was lost. "Have faith in truth, and see that ye believe in the truth." Christ is the truth. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by

me." No one that will lay hold of the Son of God in faith shall perish. But if I read my Bible right, there is no hope out of Christ. "No other foundation can man lay than is laid." Let us see that our faith lays hold of that Risen Man who was raised for our justification, and is now sitting at the right hand of God. A great many people pray for faith, and wonder why their prayers are not answered. Now, I won't say you shouldn't pray for faith; but let me say, that if I had spent half the time I prayed for faith in reading my Bible, I would have a good deal more faith than I have today. If you want to have faith in God, get acquainted with him. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and thereby God shall come to thee." He says here in the twentieth chapter of John, the thirty-first verse, "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you might have life through his name."

GOD HAS ALWAYS KEPT HIS PROMISES.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one word of his shall pass away. Why don't infidels have faith in God? It is very plain; it is because they don't know him.

Who will trust him? The damning sin of the world today is unbelief. Among men it is one of the greatest insults to say a man is a liar. But unbelief says that Jehovah is a liar.

CHRIST SEEKING SINNERS.

D. L. MOODY.

The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—Luke xix: 10.

To me this is one of the sweetest verses in the whole Bible. In this one little, short sentence we are told what Christ came into this world for. He came for a purpose; he came to do a work, and in this little verse the whole story is told. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

If you look back to the close of the eighteenth chapter, you will find Christ coming near the city Jericho. And, sitting by the wayside, was a poor blind beggar. One day, as he was sitting there, a man came down from Jerusalem, and said, "Bartimeus, I have good news for you. There is a man in Israel who is able to give you sight." "Oh, no," said the blind beggar, "there is no chance of my ever receiving sight." "But," said the man, "let me tell you, I was at Jerusalem the other day, and the great Galilean prophet was there, and I saw a man that was born blind that had received his sight. And if ever Jesus of Nazareth comes this way, don't you let him by without getting your case laid before him."

A day or two after he hears the footsteps of a coming multitude, and begins to cry, "Who is it?" "Tell me who it is." Some one said it was Jesus of Nazareth that was passing by. The moment he hears that, he says to himself, "Why, that is the man who gives sight to the blind," and he lifted up his cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!" I don't know who it was—perhaps it was Peter—who said to the man, "Hush, keep still." He thought the Lord was going up to Jerusalem to be

crowned King, and he would not like to be disturbed by a poor blind beggar. Oh, they did not know the Son of God when he was here! He would hush every harp in heaven to hear a sinner pray; no music delights him so much. But Bartimeus lifted up his voice louder, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." His prayer reached the ear of the Son of God, as prayer always will, and his footsteps were arrested. He told them to bring the man. "Bartimeus," they said, "be of good cheer, arise, he calleth thee;" and he never called any one but he had something good in store for him. Oh, sinner! remember that tonight. They led the blind man to Jesus. The Lord says, "What shall I do for you?" "Lord, that I may receive my sight." "You shall have it," the Lord said; and straightway his eyes were opened.

Pardon me, if I do draw a little on my imagination. Bartimeus gets into Jericho, and he says, "I will go and see my wife, and tell her about it." A young convert always wants to talk to his friends about salvation. Away he goes down the street, and he meets a man who passes him, goes on a few yards, and then turns round and says, "Bartimeus, is that you?" "Yes." "Well, I thought it was, but I could not believe my eyes. How have you got your sight?" "Oh, I just met Jesus of Nazareth outside the city, and asked him to have mercy on me." "Jesus of Nazareth! What, is he in this part of the country?" "Yes. He is right here in Jericho. He is now going down to the Western gate." "I should like to see him," says the man, and away he runs down the street; but he cannot catch a glimpse of him, even though he stands on tiptoe, being little of stature, and on account of the great throng around him. "Well," he says, "I am not going to be disappointed;" so he runs on, and climbs up into a sycamore tree. "If I can get on to that branch, hanging right over the highway, he cannot pass without my getting a good look at him." That must have been a very strange sight to see the rich man climbing up a tree like a boy, and hiding among the leaves, where he thought nobody would see him, to get a glimpse of the passing stranger! There is the crowd bursting out, and he looks for Jesus. At last the crowd comes to the tree; it looks as if Christ were going by; but he stops right under the tree, looks up, and says, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down." I can imagine the first thought in his mind was, "Who told him my name? I was never introduced to him." Ah! He knew him. Sinner, Christ knows all about you. He knows your name and your house. You need not try to hide from him. He knows where you are, and all about you.

Some people do not believe in sudden conversion. I should like them to answer me when was Zaccheus converted? He was certainly in his sins when he went up into the tree; he certainly was converted when he came down. He must have been converted somewhere between the branch and the ground. It didn't take a long while to convert that publican! "Make haste and come down. I shall never pass this way again; this is my last visit." Zaccheus made haste, and came down and received him joyfully. Did you ever hear of any one receiving Christ in any other way? He received him joyfully. Christ brings joy with him. Sin, gloom and darkness flee away; light, peace and joy burst into the soul. May there be many that shall come down from their high places, and receive Christ tonight!

Some one may ask, "How do you know that he is converted?" I think he gave very good evidence. I would like to see a fruitful evidence of conversion here tonight. Let some of you rich men be converted, and give half your goods to feed the poor, and people will believe pretty quickly that it is genuine work! But there is better evidence even than that. "If I have taken anything from any man falsely, I restore him fourfold." Very good evidence that. You say if people are converted suddenly they won't hold out. Zaccheus held out long enough to restore fourfold. We should like to have a work that reaches men's pockets. I can imagine one of his servants going to his neighbor next morning, with a check for $100, and handing it over. "What is this

for?" "Oh, my master defrauded you of $25 a few years ago, and this is restitution money." That would give confidence in Zaccheus' conversion! I wish a few cases like that would happen here, and then people would stop talking against sudden conversions.

The Lord goes to be the publican's guest, and while he is there the Pharisees begin to murmur and complain. It would have been a good thing if Pharisees had died off with that generation; but, unfortunately, they have left a good many grandchildren, living down here in the afternoon of this nineteenth century, who are ever complaining, "This man receives sinners." But while the Pharisees were complaining, the Lord uttered the text I have tonight, "I did not come to Zaccheus to make him wretched, to condemn him, to torment him; I came to bless and save him. The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost."

NO DIFFERENCE.

D. L. MOODY.

For there is no difference.—Romans iii: 22.

I want now to call your attention to a part of the 22d verse: "For there is no difference." Now that is one of the verses, one of the portions of scripture, that the natural man don't like. I have had many a quarrel with men on this verse, because we are just apt to think we are a little better than our friends and our neighbors, and men don't like to believe there is no difference. It is one of the greatest lessons a man has to learn—that he is a sinner. If you don't believe that you are sick you won't call in a physician. I can imagine there is someone here who says, "I don't believe that statement, that there is no difference." I can imagine there is somone here who says, "Isn't it better for a man to be a sober man than it is to be a drunkard? Isn't it better for a man to be honest than it is for a man to be dishonest?" Yes, we will admit all that; but if a man has not been saved from his sin, he must perish like the rest of the world. Now, if a man wants to find out what he is, let him turn to the 3d chapter of Romans. He can read his life there.

The law isn't to save men, but the law is brought in just to show man that he is lost and ruined under the law. These people that are trying to save themselves by the law are making the worst mistake of their lives. Some people say if they try to do right they think that it is all that is required of them. They say, "I'll try to keep the law." Well, did you ever know a man keep the law except the Son of God himself? The law was given to show man his lost and ruined condition. It was given to measure men by their fruits.

The law is a looking-glass to show a man how foul he is in the sight of God. A little while before the Chicago fire I went home one afternoon to my family, and I thought I would take them out riding. My little boy, about two years old, clapped his hands, wanted to know if I wouldn't take him up to the park to see the bears. I said that I would, and I went out. I hadn't been gone a great while when the little fellow wanted his mother to wash him up, and then he wanted to go out and play.

Well, he got playing in the dirt, and he got all covered with dirt, and when I drove up he wanted to get into the carriage. I said, "No, Willie, you are not ready; I must take you in and get you washed." The little fellow said, "O, papa, I's ready." I told him he wasn't ready, he was all over dirt. "But, papa, mamma washed me; I's clean." I could not make him believe that his face was all dirt. He could not believe it; his mamma washed him, and he was clean. So I took him up and let the little fellow see himself in the looking-glass in the carriage. He saw the dirt and it stopped his mouth. I held him up to the looking-glass so that he saw the dirt, but I did not take the looking-glass to wash his face with. That is what people do. The law was not given to save man. It was given to show him his lost and ruined condition. It wasn't given to save men—the Son of God came to do that work—but the law is the schoolmaster that came to show us what to do when we are saved. I don't know but pharisaism is as bad as drunkenness, and I find you can just sum up the whole human race into about two heads—the publican and the pharisee. Yonder is an orchard, and in that orchard two apple trees—miserable, sour, bitter. One tree has 500 apples and the other has five, but there is no difference. The fact is, the tree is bad. One man may have more fruit than another, but the fruit is bad. Make the fountain good and the stream will be good. Make men's hearts good and their lives will be good. The way to improve the soul of a man is to strike at the root of the tree, and if the heart is right, and in sympathy with God, there will be no trouble about the life. You need not be cultivating a crab-apple tree. That is what some people do.

Now, in the law it is written that a man that breaks the least of the law is guilty of all. Some people say, "I have not broken the ten commandments." They seem to think that the ten commandments are ten different laws. But a man who breaks the least of the commandments has broken all, and if you have broken one of the commandments, you have broken the law of God. Measure your heart by the law of God, my friends, and you'll find yourself guilty. The reason why people sin so much is because they don't believe they do sin. You go to a prison and you will find there a good many criminals; one is there for one offense and one for another, but they are all criminals. So some of us are guilty of one offense and some of another, but we are all sinners.

My friends, have any of you missed the mark? I see a man down there in the audience bow his head. There is hope of your being saved if you feel you have sinned. And who of us have not failed in many ways? We are all failures and every man since Adam has been a failure.

Man is a stupendous failure. God on Mount Horeb shouted the law to man, and man said, "Oh, yes, Lord, we'll keep the law; we'll not break this, thy command." And the very first commandment was, "Thou shalt not have other gods." Then Moses and Joshua go to have an interview with God, and the people whom they had left behind at once began to say, "Make us a god." And the golden calf was made and they worshiped it. The worship of the golden calf! You'll find it in New York. One man says, Give me more money; another, Give me a seat in Congress; another, Give me a bottle of rum. Ah, it's easy to condemn the Israelites—it is easy to smile, but beware that you are not guilty of the same sin. How many are hastening down to the dark caves of sin! Man in his best day, under the most favorable circumstances, is nothing but a failure.

It was my sad lot to be in Chicago when that great fire swept through the city, and I have often thought it was almost a glimpse of the judgment day. All were on a level then. There was the house of the millionaire, and near it the house of the poor man. The rich man turned his back on his gilded palace, and the poor man went with him. There was no difference. The same story runs all through the book. The scarlet thread is unbroken from Genesis to Revelation. Christ died for us; that's

the end of the law. He was bruised for us, and through him are we saved. Napoleon Bonaparte once sent out a draft. A man was drafted who didn't want to go. A friend volunteered to go in his place. He went into the army and was killed. A second draft was made, and by some accident the same man was drafted again, but he said to the officer, "You can't take me, I'm dead. I died on such a battle-field." "Why, man, you are crazy," said the officer. "You are not dead; here you are alive and well before me." "No, sir," said the man, "I am dead. The law has no claim on me; look at the roll." They looked and found another name written against his. They insisted. He carried his case before the emperor, who said that he was right—his friend had died for him. Christ died for me. The wages of sin is death. Christ has received this payment. It is the height of folly to bear this burden, when we can so easily step out from under it.

NO ROOM FOR CHRIST.

D. L. MOODY.

There was no room for them in the inn.—Luke ii:7.

For four thousand years the Jews had been looking for Christ, and now he had come. And the first thing we read of him is that there is no room for him in the inn at Bethlehem.

The sinner's heart is very much like that little inn at Bethlehem; it has no room for Christ. If a prince comes to this country from some foreign land, there is sure to be room for him, and the best you have is not good enough to bestow upon him. Yet here is the Prince of Heaven, the Prince of Peace, come to earth, and there is no room for him in the inn at Bethlehem!

Think what he came for; he came to seek and to save that

WHICH WAS LOST—

to redeem a lost world. He might have come with all the pomp and grandeur of heaven; he might have had a million of angels in his train. But he left behind him all the glory he had with his Father, and stooped from the throne that he might get his arm under the vilest sinner and lift him up to the heights of glory.

Some one has said that the Jews did not know he was the Messiah, or they would have given him a glorious reception. Would they? Why, we read that when the wise men came with the glad tidings that he was the King of the Jews, "Herod and all Jerusalem was troubled." There was no one in Jerusalem that wanted him any more than in Bethlehem. Herod hunted for his life as if he were some terrible murderer, so that his parents were obliged to flee into a foreign land.

Has the world grown any better during these eighteen hundred years? Is

CHRIST WANTED TODAY?

If he should come again, would he be welcome? Would the nations of the earth receive him with delight and gladness? What nation would make room for him today?

If it were put to the public vote, what nation would vote to have him come back to be their king? Talk about England and America being Christian nations: do you think either of them would invite him to come? Has America got room for him? Eighteen hundred years have rolled by since he went away, and more has been written about him and said about him than any other man, and yet there is no nation under heaven that wants him. When he was down here there was not a village in any part of the country that wanted him. He went to Nazareth, where he was brought up; he went into the synagogue and began to tell out the glad tidings. They took him to the brow of the hill, and would have cast him into hell if they could. They put him out of the town. And there is not a town or village under the sun today but would do the same. People say the world is growing so much better; but, as I have said, there is not a nation anywhere today that wants him. Does Germany, or France, or England or America?

Not only that; there is something a good deal worse than that. There is hardly a church in Christendom that wants him. Go to any of the churches next Sunday, and ask if they would vote to have him come back. Go down to the Exchange and ask if they have got room for him. Why, a good deal of the business would have to be done on different principles. Men would say, "We cannot make quite so much money, and we don't want him." If it should be put to the vote in Congress, would they have him back? Is there room for him among our statesmen and those who are making our laws? Would they invite him back? The fact is, there is no room for him in the world yet. Our homes, our churches, the nations of the earth, are like that little inn at Bethlehem. There is room for everything else; but in the church and the world today is "no room for him." It is one thing to talk about Christ and salvation, but when we come to talk about the return of a personal Christ, is there a church that is crying for him?

It is time for every true child of God to wake out of his sleep, to trim his lamp, and make ready for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. If nations of the world, if the churches, are not longing for his return, let us as individuals make room for him. Look at the hundreds and thousands hastening down to death and ruin! Let us invite our rejected

KING BACK INTO THE WORLD.

Do not let us be like the men of Decapolis, who, when Christ snapped the fetters from the poor demoniac, came to him, and with one accord constrained him to depart out of their coasts. There was no room for him in Decapolis.

There is a passage in the seventh chapter of John, last verse, that is very touching. It has often brought the tears to my eyes—"And every man went unto his own house." Then we read in the opening words of the eighth chapter (the two chapters should not be divided; they are really one)—"Jesus went into the Mount of Olives." There was no room for him in Jerusalem that night; no one wanted him.

Oh, friends, think of the Prince of Glory coming down into this world and having no place to lay his head;

NO ONE TO RECEIVE HIM.

He had to go into the Mount of Olives and spend the night there alone. I have often thought that I would like to have had a house in Jerusalem that night, and to have invited him there. But if I had, I suppose my door would have been locked against him like the rest. There is one thing we can all do—our hearts can receive him, and that will please him best of all.

THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO

is to receive the Resurrection and Life into your home and your heart. If the nations won't have him, let us welcome him into our hearts. Say this minute, "Welcome, thrice welcome, Son of God, into this heart of mine." He will come. What does he say? Hark! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and will open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me!" Do you hear the still small voice whispering to you to let him in? That is Jesus; he wants to come into your heart today.

SINNER, RECEIVE HIM.

Then let death come; you can shout over death and the grave and hell. He holds the keys of death, and it has no power over you. May God help you to make room for Christ. You make room for him here, and he will make room for you up yonder. He will come back bye-and-bye, and receive his own out of this dark world into that home he has gone to prepare. "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

Did you ever have a period in your life when you felt as if no one wanted you? I had that experience for about two days, and it nearly broke my heart. I wanted to die. It was a terrible thought that no one wanted me. I was a stranger in a strange city looking for work. I went from place to place, and got only a gruff answer—"No, sir;" "No, sir." No one wanted me. It seemed as if the Son of God must have had something of that feeling down here;

NO ONE WANTED HIM.

The world did not want him; it took him and put him to death. If he should come here, and go from one to another, would you say "No, Jesus, I do not want you; go thy way this time;" or would you open your heart and let him in? In one place it speaks of his locks being wet with the dews of the night. Oh, may God help every unsaved soul to

RECEIVE THE SON OF GOD.

Oh, sinner, won't you have this rejected King, and receive him into your heart and home this very hour?

GOD'S LOVE.

D. L. MOODY.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.—I. John iv: 1-4.

We will certainly overcome the world, if the Spirit of Christ is in us: Christ has conquered and overcome it. If we have not that spirit the world will overcome us. It is only a question of time. We are not strong enough to cope with the world; and the question for us to consider is, whether sin shall overcome us, or whether we shall join the war with Christ against the world.

There is nothing in the world that men prize so much as they do love. Show me a man that has no one to love him, and no one to care for him, and I will show you a man who is very near suicide. If we could only convince the world that God is love, there would be a great flocking to him. The old philosopher, Aristotle, said it was against every inclination of nature to love without being loved in return. There is one truth that Satan would like to blot out of this Book—that is, "God is love." For 6,000 years he has been striving to convince men that God is not love; that God is angry with the sinner. I fear people quote that wrongly very often. That God is angry with sin is one of the strongest proofs of his love. I have got a boy; suppose that boy goes astray. The angry spirit will alight and steal over me; but it is just because I love him that I am angry with him. If I were not angry I would let him go unheeded. God is not angry with the sinner; it is with sin, which is bringing darkness and woe into our homes and lives. Let us bear that in mind when we think of God. A great many people think that God is not love; that is because of false teaching. Mothers make a mistake in teaching children that God does not love them when they do wrong; but when they do right, then God loves them. I think that is false teaching; it is not taught in scripture. You do not teach your children that when they do wrong you hate them. No, it does not change your love. If you did, you would change your love a great many times.

I had a false idea, a long time ago, that Christ loved me, and that God sat on a throne, a great stern Ruler; while Christ always seemed to be acting as Mediator—and not that God loved me. But when I was a father I learned to understand that exceeding love which could send his Son to die for us.

[Quoting the first verses of the thirteenth chapter of John, Mr. Moody said:] Christ knew very well what was about to take place—that one of those who sat at meat with him should sell him for thirty pieces of silver; and that one of them—one of the three he loved—would be a traitor to him. The knowledge that he loved him must make Judas' perdition more terrible, because he betrayed that love and trampled it under his feet. He knew that one of the chosen three with him on the Mount of Transfiguration and in Gethsemane was going to deny him and swear that he never knew him—yet he loved them until the end. It was that love which brought Peter back to his master, who had always loved him.

I don't care how bad you have been; in spite of all your sins, God loves you

still. Come to him; he beckons you to himself, that you may there find rest from a sinful world.

Love always descends. A mother loves her child more than the child loves the mother. I love my children far more than they could love me. God loves us more than we can love him. The love of God passeth knowledge; man cannot grasp it. When Columbus landed in America, he did not know that he had discovered a vast continent. He knew nothing of its vast rivers, its great lakes and valleys. What did he know about the wealth of minerals hidden in the mountains? So it will take us all our days to discover the love of God; its depths we know nothing about. We will need all eternity to fathom it.

Ask me why I love God. You might as well ask why the sun shines. It is because I can't help it. I read in Isaiah xxxviii, "He has taken all my sins, and cast them behind his back." It is the safest place to have your sins. Your sins are covered; no enemy of your soul can find them. You cannot bury them—some neighbor would find them out; there would be a resurrection. But if God casts them behind his back, how secure you are! Once there, I challenge the devil himself to find them. I challenge any individual on earth to find them. Again, we are told that God has put our sins away as far as the east is from the west. I don't know how far that is. Astronomers tell us that the light of some planets has not struck us yet, though it has been traveling towards the globe for ages, and though light travels at 180,000 miles per second. God has taken our sins and cast them into the depths of the sea.

God wants you to make this distinction between sin and sinner. God is at war with sin; but sin will lose. In Rom. v:8, Paul says, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." God loves you while you are in sin. Don't think that you have got to get out of sin before you come to God; if you had to do that you could never be saved. If Christ is in the heart he will destroy all your sin; that is what he came for. He wants you to believe that he is your friend, that he comes to help and save you. "Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins." Love comes first. A great many would put it: in him that washed us and loved us. He loves us just as we are, and now he wants to wash us and make us meet for his country.

SALVATION.

D. L. MOODY.

The grace of God has appeared unto all men.—Titus ii: 11.

Salvation is to every person. Not to one broken heart; not to one child, but to all, as many as will receive him. If you want to be forgiven, if you want the favor of God, you can have it. A man that has been living in sin may be forgiven all at once. But be not deceived—that which a man soweth he must also reap. A man is angry with you and sows tares in your field. You go to him and say, "Did you sow tares in my field?" He says, "Yes, sir. I am very sorry. I hope you will forgive me, I was angry with you." You may forgive, perhaps; but that doesn't help the consequences. Now, I want to say to all that class of people, though you cannot help the consequences, God is ready to forgive you. The grace of God has come to this city; the grace of God is for all men; but you don't believe it. Now, we preach the gospel, and you don't believe it. God didn't send an angel, but his only begotten Son, to die for all men, not for one man; not for one man especially, but for all men. I had a friend in Libby Prison. News came that one man was to be sent back home—one out of 960. Now suppose I was to say to you, "The grace of God has been sent to just one of you." Wouldn't you be anxious to hear the name? And when my friend heard his name, "Henry Clay Trumbull," he couldn't believe it for joy. But now I say to you, Salvation is to all men whosoever will. To every soul. Some years ago they were trying to get a bill through Parliament to liberate some slaves on an island. They were waiting for the news. All crowded to the shores. The last news they heard was, that the bill was most through, and they were very anxious to hear the next news—very anxious. As the ship approached the land, the captain put the trumpet to his mouth, and shouted, "Free! Free!" So I shout to you, "Liberty! Liberty!" And God says, "I'll pay your debts; come, come boldly to the throne of grace." A man might as well despair of getting water standing on a river bank. You can get it; you can if you'll only come. Salvation is for every man. If Christ were on the earth, suppose one of the wealthy families up here on the hill should invite him to dinner. The man doesn't receive him as an honored guest, not even the ordinary civilities of water for the feet. A poor woman comes in there; a poor fallen woman. She heard him preaching on the street. And she has pushed her way in by the servants, and is down at his feet washing them and wiping them with the hair of her head. Among the guests, perhaps, was the very one who had betrayed this woman. This can't be the true prophet. The Master says: "I have somewhat to say unto thee, Simon; thou gavest me no water (the commonest civility, like shaking hands nowadays), but this woman out of a true heart has given me what you failed to provide." Grace of God just shone right out there. God don't want you to be punished. God told Moses to provide a universal remedy. Not one solitary one, looking at the serpent, but was saved. Whosoever would believe should have eternal life. They were dying in crowds all over that camp. Over there is a funeral procession bearing away a dead mother; another here bears away a dear child or young man. You see the hearse

wind its way slowly through the city. Many a home desolate, many a heart broken. There a woman is weeping over her only son. She was depending upon him to bear her to the grave; now the plague is upon him, no hope, no remedy. Suddenly someone comes along and says, "Heard the good news? God has told Moses to put up a brazen serpent on a pole, that whoever looks at it may be healed." "Good news for you, my son;" and she tells him about it. "Well," he says, "mother, I am too far gone." That's like a good many people nowadays. They are complaining—"I am not good enough." His mother catches him up in her arms and bears him out. His eyes are weak at first, and he cannot see; but his mother says, "Keep looking, keep looking." At last his eyes fall on the serpent, and he is well. There is a remedy and grace more abundant. God doesn't spurn any man. Look yonder; see some who were as black as any on earth. Ask Mary Magdalen; ask Zaccheus. He says, "The grace of God came upon me while in the tree." Ask John Bunyan how he came there. "When I was mending old kettles the grace of God came upon me," he says. If you will just take it you can. It is for every one of you, if you but say, This night, as for me, I will have it.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

D. L. MOODY.

Luke xv: 11.

We have for our subject one of the two young men we have read about in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. There is not a person but who is as well acquainted with the fifteenth chapter of Luke as the preacher. Probably there is not a prodigal but knows the story in this chapter of Luke. It is not necessary for me to tell you why this young man went away. "All we like sheep have gone astray;" every one is turned too easily away. This prodigal went away without any reason that we know of; we are not told that his father was unkind to him. If there is one person in this world to be pitied more than another, it is the man who has all the money that he wants to spend and nothing to do. When the prodigal got that which was coming to him, it says he gathered his goods all together, and took his journey into a far country. Well, he was considered popular in that distant country—most men who have plenty of money and nothing to do are very popular; but how long his popularity lasted we are not told, because we do not know just how long his money held out. And when he had spent all, at last he came to want. Did you ever stop to think how many prodigals there are in this city. This city is full of prodigals. They have not only left their earthly parents, they have sent many of those parents to an untimely grave. And how many have turned their backs upon God and have wandered away!

I do not know where the prodigal son in this story went to, but he got as far away as he could from home. Perhaps he wanted to get away from home restraint and home influences; perhaps he talked as many young men do now, in a laughing way, saying he was only "sowing his wild oats." It makes my heart sad when I hear young men use that expression. A great many young men seem to forget that they have to

reap what they sow, tenfold. If a man sows a handful, he reaps a bushel; if a man sows the wind he reaps the whirlwind; it is only a question of time. But this prodigal did not go and beg, like a great many men in these days. For that one thing I have respect for the prodigal, because he did go to work. It was a very humble occupation to be sure, but if he could not get what he wanted he was willing to do most anything rather than to beg; and there is no meaner occupation possible to a Jew than to feed swine; but he was willing to do that. If a great many of those people who are now called tramps would go to work we would all have sympathy for them.

I suppose you prodigals all want to know how he got back, and you want to know how to get back yourselves, hundreds of you. When the man began to come to himself, he woke up to the fact that the best friend he had in the world was his father. There was one thing that the prodigal never lost: he never lost his father's love. His father loved him right on through it all. I find that a good many men, who are living in sin, wonder why it is that God does not answer their prayers. Well, God loves them too much to answer their prayers. Suppose the son had written his father a letter, saying, "I am in want, suppose you send me some money." The father would have loved him too well to answer that prayer. Your Heavenly Father loves you too well. If you have gone off into a foreign country, he wants you to go home to him. Oh, if there is a poor prodigal, do not go on in that terrible delusion that your father has forgotten you. Here is a father that has nine children, and one is a prodigal away from home, but he thinks more of that one than he does of all the rest.

One of the greatest impediments a man has is his terrible pride. This young man says, "I went away with abundance, and now I have to go back in rags." Perhaps his pride kept him away for some time. One day he came to himself, and made up his mind to return to his father's house.

"Why, the very servants are better off than I am; there is bread enough and to spare in my father's house; and the young man came to himself, and he said,

"I WILL."

That is the time that his heart turned back to God. I would to God we could get thousands to say that word, "I will arise and go to my father." Nine-tenths of the battle was won when he said, "I will arise and go to my father." He may be in a far country, but he will soon be home if he has made up his mind to come. The first thing he was going to do was to confess. "I will confess that I have sinned against heaven. I will confess that I have done wrong, and I will ask if he will let me be as one of his servants."

I see him on his way, and there is joy up there now; they ring the bells of heaven. I see the guardian angel that watches over him, and the moment he came to himself, then there was joy on high. It was a good thing for the prodigal that his father was alive, wasn't it? He wouldn't have received a very warm welcome from that brother of his. Ah, young man, you had better make the most of that experience, and get home before that old father dies, or that godly, praying mother. Go and write a letter to your mother or your father, and ask them to forgive you! Ask your Father in heaven to forgive you.

The whole story of that prodigal is just written to bring out God's love, or the compassion of God. "And when he saw him a great way off he had compassion on him." He did not wait for him to come. He did not say, "He went away without cause, I will not go to meet him." And when he meets him, he falls upon his neck, and he weeps over him; and the servants come running out to see what is the matter. And the boy begins to make his speech: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!" And just as he was going

to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," the father interrupts him, and he says to one servant, "Go bring the best robe and put it on him;" and to another, "Go to my jewel-box and get a ring and put it on his finger;" and to another one, "Go and get the shoes;" and to another, "Go and kill the fatted calf." And there was joy there. What joy there was in that home!

"HE HAD COMPASSION ON HIM."

My friend, don't you think that since then that story has been repeated nearly every day—prodigals going back—and I never yet heard of any man going back that did not get a warm welcome. There isn't a poor prodigal in this city but that if he will go back to his father he will receive a warm welcome. But that isn't the lesson we want to teach. It is not only to be reconciled to your earthly father, but, my friends, to your heavenly Father. The most reasonable thing you can do is to go to your heavenly Father and ask his forgiveness. I have a letter here, I think it is one of the last letters I received from England. The letter goes on to state that a son and husband had left his father's house—left his wife and children without a cause; and now in closing up the letter the sister says, "He need not fear reproach, only love awaits him at home." The father of the prodigal did not reproach his boy; did not have unwelcome words when he had returned from his wanderings. And so God does not reproach the sinner. He knows what human nature is—how liable a mortal is to go astray. He is always ready to forgive and take you back. Christ says he will forgive; he is full of love and compassion and tenderness. If a poor sinner comes and confesses, God is willing and ready to forgive you. Oh, you that have gone astray, remember this.

Perhaps there is no subject in the Bible that takes hold of me with as great force as this subject of the wandering sinner. It enters deeply into my life; it comes right home into our own family. The first thing I remember was the death of my father. It was a beautiful day in June when he fell suddenly dead. The shock made such an impression on me, young as I was, that I shall never forget it. I remember nothing about the funeral, but his death made a lasting impression upon me. Then my eldest brother, to whom my mother looked up to comfort her in her loneliness and in great affliction, became a wanderer; he left home. I need not tell you how that mother mourned for her boy, how she waited day by day and month by month for his return. I need not say how night after night she watched and wept and prayed. Many a time we were told to go to the postoffice to see if a letter had not come from him, but we had to bring back the sorrowful words, "No letter yet, mother!" Many a time have I waked up and heard my mother pray, "O God, bring back my boy." We would sit around the fireside of an evening and ask her to tell us about our father, and she would talk for hours about him; but if the mention of my eldest brother should chance to come in, then all would be hushed; she never spoke of him but with tears. Many a time did she try to conceal them, but all would be in vain, and when Thanksgiving day would come a chair used to be set for him. Our friends and neighbors gave him up, but our mother had faith that she would see him again. One day in the middle of summer a stranger was seen approaching the house. The man had a long beard, and when my mother first saw him she did not start or rise. But soon, she cried, "It's my boy, my dear, dear boy," and sprang to the door. But there the boy stood, and said, "Mother, I will never cross the threshold until you say you forgive me." Do you think he had to stay there long? No, no; her arms were soon around him and she wept upon his shoulder, as did the father of the prodigal son. I heard of it while in a distant city, and what a thrill of joy shot through me! But what joy on earth can equal the joy in heaven when a prodigal

comes home? Your Father wants you. Dear son, come to him. Confess your sin and he will have mercy upon you and forgive you. May heaven's blessing rest upon every soul here is my prayer.

MUST BE BORN AGAIN.

D. L. MOODY.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—John iii: 3.

You will see by the third chapter of Romans that it is absolutely necessary that a man be born again. You see in the third chapter of Romans what man is by nature. If you want to find out what God is turn to the third chapter of John: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him shall have everlasting life." Yes, read the third chapter of Romans if you want to find out how man lost life. Then read the third chapter of John, and you will see how man is going to get everlasting life back again. If there are people who want to know what love God has for them, let them read the third chapter of John and they will find it there, and find eternal life. It is the very foundation of our hope and the very foundation of our religion. It is a solemn question—"Am I born of the Spirit? Have I been born again?" For you know that "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now, let me say what regeneration is not. It is not going to church. Very often I see people and ask them if they are Christians. "Yes, of course I am, at least I think I am; I go to church every Sunday." If you go down in the dark alleys and by-ways of the city, and do all the good you can, preach God's word and show God's love to those abandoned beings—I tell you this is not regeneration. No! no! It is a false idea that you get regenerated by scattering the seed of God by the wayside. But still there is another class of Christians, or who think they are Christians. They say "I am trying to do what is right—am I not a Christian? Is not that a new birth?" No; I tell you, no. There is yet another class—those who have turned over a new leaf and think they are regenerated. No; forming a new resolution is not being born again. Another class says, "I go to the Lord's Supper; I partake uniformly of the sacrament." Blessed ordinance! Jesus hath said that as often as ye do it ye commemorate his death. Yet, that is not being born again; that is not passing from death unto life. Except you are born of the Spirit, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God. What has a sacrament to do with that? What has baptism to do with being born again? But another man comes and says, "I say my prayers regular." Still, I say, that that is not being born again. That is not being born of the Spirit.

It is a very solemn question, then, that comes up before us, and would that every one should ask himself earnestly and faithfully:

"HAVE I BEEN BORN AGAIN?

But I can imagine some one says, "If that is to have a new birth what am I to do? I can't create life,

I CERTAINLY CAN'T SAVE MYSELF."

You certainly can't, and we don't preach that you can. We tell you that it is utterly impossible to make a man better without Christ. There must be a new creation. Regeneration is a new creation, and if it is a new creation it must be the work of God. When God created the earth he was alone. When God redeemed the world he was alone.

When Christ shouted on Calvary, "It is finished," he meant what he said. All that men have to do now is just to accept of the work of Jesus Christ. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." I can't understand all about the wind. I may go up a few hundred feet and find it blowing in an entirely opposite direction from what it is down here. You ask me to explain these currents of wind, but because I can't explain it, and because I don't understand it, suppose I stand here and assert, "O humph! there is no such thing as wind." My friends, you might just as well tell me that there is no wind as to tell men there is no such thing as a man born of the Spirit. I have felt the Spirit of God working in my heart just as much as I have felt the wind blowing in my face. There are a great many things I can't reason out that I believe. I never could reason out the Creation. I can see the world, but I can't tell how God made it out of nothing. All your Tyndalls and your philosophers of the present day can't create one grain of sand out of nothing. But even these men will admit there is a creating power. There are a great many things that I can't explain and that I can't reason out that I believe. I can't help believing in the regeneration of man when I see men that have been reclaimed. I see men that have been reformed. Haven't some of the very worst men been regenerated—picked up out of the pit and their feet put upon the rock and a new song put in their mouth? It was cursing and blaspheming and now it is praising God. Old things have passed away and all things have become new, not reformed only, but regenerated—a new man in Christ Jesus.

Look you, down there in the dark alleys of the city is a poor drunkard. I think if you want to get near hell, go to a poor drunkard's home. See the want and distress that reign there. A footstep is heard at the door, and the children run and hide themselves. The patient wife waits to meet him. The man has been her torment. Many a time she has borne about for weeks the marks of blows. And now she waits expecting to hear his oaths and suffer his brutal treatment. He comes in and says to her: "I have been to the meeting, and I heard there that if I will, I can be converted.

I BELIEVE THAT GOD IS ABLE TO SAVE ME."

Go down to that house again in a few weeks and what a change! As you approach you hear some one singing. It is not the song of a reveler, but they are singing "Rock of Ages." The children are no longer afraid of him, but cluster around his knee. His wife is near him, her face lit up with a happy glow. Is not that a picture of regeneration? I can take you to thousands of such homes, made happy by the religion of Christ. What men want is the power to overcome temptation, the power to lead a right life.

The only way to get into the Kingdom of God is to be born into it. There is a law in this country requiring that the president must be born in the country. When foreigners come to our shores they have no right to complain against such a law which forbids them from ever becoming presidents. Now, hasn't God a right to make a law that all those who become heirs of eternal life must be born into his Kingdom? If we are to be happy in heaven we must begin to make a heaven here on earth.

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. If a gambler or blasphemer were taken out of the streets of this city and placed on the crystal pavement of heaven and under the shadow of the tree of life he would say: "I don't want to stay here."

If a house is built upon the sand it falls; but if it is founded upon a rock it stands firm against the wind and wave. Our faith can never endure unless

IT IS FOUNDED ON CHRIST.

I may be speaking to a father and mother who have a loved one up yonder, and if you could hear her speak, she would say, "Come this way." Haven't you a sainted friend? Young man or young lady, haven't you a mother in the world of light, and if you could hear her speak, wouldn't she say, "Come this way, my son"—"Come this way, my daughter?" If you ever see her again you must be born again. Yes, we all have an Elder Brother there. Nearly 1900 years ago he crossed over, and from the heavenly shores he is calling you to heaven. Let us turn our back upon the world. Let us give a deaf ear to the world. Let us get our heart in the kingdom of God, and cry, "Life! Life! Eternal life!"

LAW AND GRACE.

D. L. MOODY.

Moreover, the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. v: 20, 21.

Now sin reigns unto death. The penalty of the law of God is death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." No use of having a law if there is not a penalty attached to the disobedience of it. Suppose this State should pass a law that you should not steal or that you should not murder, and put no penalty to the infraction of that law. What would be the use of that law? The law brings us to death, and there it leaves us. It doesn't give life; it never has given life, and it never can. Sin reigns unto death, but the grace of God hath reigned unto eternal life. So when Moses had brought the children of Israel down to Jordan, and couldn't go any further, then came Joshua and took the congregation over and away on their journey. Joshua means Jesus. And as Joshua led them past the Jordan, so Jesus will take his people through the dark valley of the shadow of death unto eternal life. He is the Good Shepherd and he came to save his people from their sins. When John came he appeared as a forerunner of grace and Jesus. He was the last representative of the old dispensation. He brought the people who came to be baptized down into the Jordan, and he left them in Jordan. When Christ came he commenced where John had left off. He went into Jordan and brought the people out of it. That is the difference between law and grace; law slays a man, but grace makes him live; the law takes a man to death and judgment, but Christ comes and quickens him, giving eternal life.

Law leads unto death, but grace to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Some people are lingering around Sinai yet—around the old dispensation—around the law. You can't get them to come away from Horeb. It is better to come to the Mount of Olives, better to come to Calvary. Now I want to carry you to another verse, the 14th of the 6th chapter of Romans. There it is written: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What, then, shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Bear that in mind; ye are not under the law, but under grace. The Lord Jesus came to bring us out from under the law. Under that dispensation it was do and live—now it is live and do. Christ came and says, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Before that it was thou shalt not do this or that. But grace reigns unto eternal life by him, and if you love him you will keep his commandments, and grace shall bring you unto everlasting happiness.

The law says, "Stone him;" grace says, "Forgive him." When Moses was in Egypt to punish Pharaoh, he turned the waters into blood. When Christ was on earth he turned the water into wine. That is the difference between law and grace. The law says, "Kill him;" grace, "Forgive." Law says, "Let him die;" grace says, "Love him." Law makes us crooked; grace straightens us. The law makes us vile; grace cleanses us. That is the difference between law and grace. When Moses came to the burning bush, he was commanded to take the shoes from off his feet. When the Prodigal came home after sinning he was given a pair of shoes to put on his feet. I would a thousand times rather be under grace than under the law.

And now the question comes, how are we to be partakers of this grace? In the 4th chapter of Hebrews and 16th verse we read, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, and find grace and strength to help in time of need." God wants us to come and get all the grace we need. The reason why there are so many half-starved Christians is because they didn't come to the throne of grace. It is related of Alexander that he gave one of his generals who had pleased him permission to draw on his treasurer for any sum. When the draft came in the treasurer was scared, and wouldn't pay it till he saw his master. And when the treasurer told him what he had done, Alexander said, "Don't you know that he has honored me and my kingdom by making a large draft?" So we honor God by making a large draft on him. If there is a drunkard who wishes to get control of his appetite all he has got to do is to come and get all the grace he needs. You can get enough to overcome every trial and sorrow. God wants you to come right to the throne of grace and to come boldly. Awhile ago I learned from the papers that there had been a run on the banks and many of them were broken. What a good thing it would be to get up a run on the bank of heaven! What a glorious thing to get up a run on the Throne of Grace! God is able to help you and deliver you if you will only come to him. God has grace enough and capital enough. What would you think of a man who had $1,000,000 in the bank and only drew out a penny a day? That's you and I, and the sinner is blinder than we are. The throne of grace is established, and there we are to get all the grace we need. Sin is not so strong as the arm of God. He will help and deliver you if you will come and get the grace you need.

Now, take all the afflictions that flesh is heir to, and all the troubles and trials of this life, no matter how numerous, and God has grace enough to carry you right through without a shadow. Some people borrow all the trouble they can from the past and the future and then multiply it by ten, and get a big load, and go reeling and staggering under it. If you ask them to help anyone else, they say they can't; they've got enough to do to take care of their own, forgetting, "Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you." A man was once traveling along a highway, and he overtook one carrying a heavy burden on his back, and he asked him to ride. But

the man, after he got up, kept his bundle on, saying, "I am willing to carry it if I can only get a ride." So, many are content to be nominal Christians, and go along with great loads and burdens. What is the throne of grace for but to help you carry your burdens? God says "Come," and "As your day so shall your strength be." I suppose we all have thorns in the flesh. Instead of praying God to take the thorns out, let us pray for grace to bear them. Let us live day by day, casting our care on God. In this 5th chapter of Romans there are these precious words: "Peace for the past, grace for the present, glory for the future." Some think when they get to Calvary they have got all. They have just commenced. By and by we shall see the King in his beauty. The glory is just beyond.

A man said to me some time ago, "Moody, have you got grace to go to the stake as a martyr?" "No; what do I want to go to the stake for?" A person said to me, "Moody, if God should take your son, have you grace to bear it?" I said, "What do I want grace for? I don't want grace to bear that which has not been sent. If God should call upon me to part with my boy he would give me strength to bear it." What we want is grace for the present, to bear the trials and temptations of every day. "As thy day so shall thy strength be." Christ gives according to our need. Rowland Hill tells a story of a rich man and a poor man of his congregation. The rich man came to Mr. Hill with a sum of money which he wished to give to the poor man, and asked Mr. Hill to give it to him as he thought best, either all at once or in small amounts. Mr. Hill sent the poor man a five pound note with the indorsement, "More to follow." Now, which do you think did the most good? Every few months came the remittance with the same message, "More to follow." Now, that's grace. More to follow. Yes, thank God, there's more to follow. Oh, wondrous grace! May the grace of God reach every heart is my earnest prayer.

COMING—ALWAYS COMING.

C. H. SPURGEON.

To whom coming.—1 Peter ii: 4.

The apostle is speaking of the Lord Jesus, of whom he had previously said, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," and he follows that sentence up with this, "To whom coming as unto a living stone." Now, I want to call your attention to this present participle—this act of coming—for there is much to counsel and to comfort us in the fact and the reflection it suggests.

Now we have not so far to go to heaven in the guardian care of Jesus Christ, and then at a certain point to change, so as to have somebody else to be our leader, or some other method of salvation. No, he is the author and he is the finisher of our faith. If we begin aright, we begin with "Christ is all"; if we go on aright, we go on with "Christ is all"; and if we finish aright, we finish with "Christ is all." It was a great delusion of some in Paul's day that after they had begun in the spirit, they hoped to be made perfect in the flesh; and there are some nowadays who begin as sinners resting upon Christ, but they want to go on as independent saints, resting on themselves. Blessed he his holy name, with us it is Christ in the morning, when we are young and full of strength; it is Christ at noon, when we are bearing the burden and heat of the day; and it is Christ at eventide, when we lean on the staff for very age, and the shadows lengthen, and the light is dim. Yea, and it shall be Christ only when the night settles down and the death-shade curtains our last bed.

It is not with our Lord as it was with Moses. Moses led the people through the wilderness, but he could not bring them into the promised land; that was reserved for Joshua. David collected the materials for the temple, but though he could gather together vast stores of great value, he could not build them up, for the Lord said that this honor should be reserved for his son that should be after him. But our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed be his name, has not only gathered together his people and the precious treasures with which he is to build a living temple unto God; but he will also build it stone upon stone, and bring forth the top stone with shouting. I remember seeing a somewhat famous portrait of our Lord in which the artist never lifted his pencil from the paper from beginning to end, but drew the whole of it with one continuous series of circles. So here I may say the whole Christian life is drawn in one line—coming unto Christ. "To whom coming." When we have spoken upon that, I shall answer two questions; the one—*what is the best way of coming to him at first?* the other—*what is the best way of coming to him afterwards?* May the Holy Spirit bless the whole discourse to our souls.

I. First, then, HERE IS A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. It is a continuous "coming" to Jesus.

If you have your Bibles open at the text I want you to notice that the expression occurs in connection with two figures. There is one which precedes it in the second verse, namely, the figure of *a little child* fed upon milk. "As new-born babes, desire

the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming." Children come to their parents, and they frequently come rather longer than their parents like; it is the general habit of children to come to their parents for what they need. You do not need in most of your houses, I suspect, to ring a bell to call your children together to the family table: they all carry little interior bells which let them know pretty accurately when meal-times will be, and they come freely, without persuading or forcing. They come to your table just as they used to come. When first you had to lift them into their little chairs then they were coming; and now they take their big chairs as if they quite belonged to them; but they still keep on coming. Yes, and they come to you not only for bread and for meat, but they come for a great many things besides. In fact, the older they grow, the more they come for.

Now, in all this long talk I have been showing you how to understand the figure of coming to Christ. Just what your children began to do from the first moment you fixed your eyes on them, and what they have continued to do ever since, that is just what you are to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to be always coming to him—coming to him for spiritual food, coming to him for spiritual garments, coming to him for washing, guiding, help, and health: coming in fact for everything. You will be wise if, the older you grow, the more you come, and he will be all the better pleased with you. If you find out other wants and make clearer discoveries of your needs, come for more than you used to come for, and prove thereby that you better understand and appreciate what manner of love it is—that ye should be called the sons of God. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Has he not said to you, "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it"? It is rather strange that you never have to tell your children to do that. They do it without any telling; but you have been told to do it, and yet you do not do it. He complains, "Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob."

If you will look again at your Bibles, you will get a second illustration from the fourth verse, "To whom coming as unto *a living stone,* disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Here we have the figure of a building. A building comprises first a foundation, and then the stones which are brought to the foundation and are built upon it. This furnishes a very beautiful picture of Christian life. I have read that there has been discovered beneath Jerusalem an immense cavern or quarry near the Damascus gate. Travelers who have been into this quarry say that there are niches in the live rock out of which the magnificent stones were cut with which Solomon's temple was built. Some stones that were expected to form part of the building never reached it: there is one huge stone of that sort in the Bezetha cavern now. It is still there, for this reason—that, though it is squared and chiseled on the front and two sides, and also on the top and the bottom, yet it has never been cut away at the back, and so it cleaves to the rock of which it is naturally a part, and remains in its original darkness. Now, the passage that I would like you to think of is that in the fifty-first chapter of Isaiah—"Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." There are many here present who have been cut off from the rock, and lifted up out of the horrible pit; since which early operation of divine grace they have been coming and coming till they have reached the foundation, and are built up as lively stones in the temple which is established upon Christ. But there are others of you who need further excavating. God has begun his work upon you, he has used sharp tools, and begun to separate you from the world: it has taken a long time to get you cut away from the rock, even in part. You used to be altogether

sinful and earth-bound, and you lived in worldiness, just as the stone formed a part of the rock; God has been using his great chisel upon you, and cut you away, and separated you to a great extent from your fellow men; but still at the back, in secret, your heart cleaves to sin. You have not given up the darling lust of your heart and therefore you are not quarried yet, and you cannot come to Christ, for that is impossible till you are separated from the rock of which you naturally form a part. Oh, how I wish that almighty grace would take the saw of the word to-night, and make clear cuts right across your stony heart until you are sawn right adrift from the hard rock of sin, that you may afterwards be made to come to Christ to be built upon him as your foundation.

All the men in the world could not draw a sinner to Christ. No machinery is known or will ever be invented that can ever draw a proud, stubborn will to Christ. We may tug and pull till we break the ropes, but we shall never make a soul stir one inch Christward. But there is another power which can accomplish the work impossible to us. "I, if I be lifted up," says Christ, "will draw all men unto me." He has such attractive power that he draws the stones out of the quarry of nature, right up to the foundation which his free grace has laid in Zion, and they are built upon him. This is the second part of the work of grace in the soul; first it separates us from the rock, and then it draws us up to the foundation, and in both it is working out our coming to Christ.

What a task it is sometimes—to let a huge stone down upon the foundation, and to get it to lie square and true, so that every bit of it is in proper position with the rest of the structure. Picture the process to your mind's eye. We have got the stone upon the base, but half of it projects beyond the foundation, and so far it has nothing to lean upon. That will never do. It must be moved till it lies plumb with the foundation, exactly square with the other stones, and till every portion of it rests firmly on its proper bed. Oh, dear hearts, this is one work which the grace of God has to do with you—to bring you to lie upon Christ, to recline upon Christ, and that wholly, rightly, and squarely. It takes a long time to bring some sinners to this; they want to be propped up with a little bit of self-righteousness, they cannot be induced to lie right square upon Christ; they want to tilt a little, have a little shoring up with their own doings, and a little dependence on themselves: but this will never do. "To whom coming," says the text, "coming as to a living stone." Oh, that almighty grace would constrain you all to be coming till you lie flat and square on Christ, till you have Christ at one corner, and Christ at the other corner, and Christ at all the four corners whereon your soul lies; till you are resting on the Lord Jesus Christ at all times, in all respects, under all circumstances, for everything. Other foundation can no man lay; be ye sure that ye rest wholly upon it.

These two figures of the babe and the stone have shown you, I trust, what the text means. I have not gone far afield to find them—they lie, as you have seen, in the immediate context. "To whom coming" is an apt description of the whole of Christian life: mind that you make it the rule of yours.

II. But, now, secondly, I have to ANSWER THE QUESTION, *what is the best way of coming to Christ at first?*

There are some poor hearts among you longing to be saved. "Ah," you say, "I hear that if I come to Christ I shall be saved; but how can I come to him? What do you mean by coming to Jesus?" Well, our reply is plain and clear,—it is to trust Christ, to depend upon him, to believe him, to rely upon him. Then they inquire, "But how can I come to Christ? In what way would you recommend me to come?" The answer is, the very best way to come to Christ is to *come with all your needs about you.* If you could get rid of half your needs apart from Christ, you would not come to

Jesus half so well as you can with the whole of them pressing upon you, for your need furnishes you with motives for coming, and gives you pleas to urge.

A king determines to act with generosity; and, to show how liberal his disposition is, he desires to make a banquet for those who need it most. He says, "If I make a great feast to my lords and dukes, they will think little of my hospitality, for they fare sumptuously every day; therefore I will seek out guests who will be more likely to be grateful. Where shall I find guests who will most enjoy my dainties, men who will eat with the greatest gusto, and drink with the greatest delight?" Having considered the matter, he cries to his heralds, "Go ye into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." From among the tramps by the roadside the heralds soon gather starving wretches who exactly meet the king's wishes. Here is a poor man who has had nothing to eat for the last forty-eight hours. Look at his eager delight at the sight of the food! If you want somebody to eat largely and joyfully, is not he the man? Yes, the poorer, the more hungry, the more destitute the guests, the more honor is accorded to the king who feeds such mendicants, and receives such vagrants to his table. Hear how they shout the king's praises when they are filled with his meat! They will never have done thanking him. Now, if I address a soul to-night that is very needy, very faint, very desponding, you are a fit guest for my Master, because you have such a fine appetite for his generous repast of love. The greatness of your need is your fitness for coming to Christ, and if you want to know how to come, come just as you are. Tarry not to improve yourself one single atom; come as you are, with all your sin and filthiness and need about you, for that is the best way to come.

If you want to know how to come aright the first time, I should answer, *come to find everything you want in Christ.* Do not come with a load of your own wealth. Remember what Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours." Do not bring your old rubbish with you. "I thought I was to bring repentance." Do not attempt to do so, but look to Jesus for it. Jesus Christ is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. Come and receive a heart of flesh, for you cannot make one for yourself. "Oh, but I thought I was to bring faith." Faith also is the gift of Christ. It cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; draw near then to that word to find faith. Come for everything. "Oh, but I want to feel." And then, I suppose, after you have found a nice lot of feelings you will come to Christ, and say, "Lord, thou art now able to save me, for my feelings are right." What self-conceit! Come to Christ for feelings; come to Christ for everything.

I heard of a shop some time ago in a country town where they sold everything, and the man said that he did not believe that there was anything a human being wanted but what he could rig him out from top to toe. Well, I do not know whether that promise would have been carried out to the letter if it had been tried, but I know it is so with Jesus Christ; he can supply you with all you need, for "Christ is all." There is not a need your soul can possibly have but the Lord Jesus Christ can supply it, and the very best way to come is to come to him for everything.

III. There remains one other question—WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COME AFTERWARDS? The answer is,—Come just as you used to come. Brethren and sisters, the text does not say that you *have come* to Christ, though that is true, but that you *are coming;* and you are to be always coming. The way to continue coming is to come just in the same way as you came at first. I am persuaded that the only happy, the only safe way for a Christian to live is to live in daily dependence upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, just as he did when he was a babe in grace and a stone newly drawn from the quarry of nature. I know what it is to build up a nice structure of my own experience on the foundation of Christ, and to climb upon it, instead of standing on the foundation. If you were ever on top of Snowdon, or some other high

mountain, you will have noticed that to make the standing a little higher they put up some wooden scaffold or other, some ten or twelve feet of platform, to increase the elevation, and then everybody wants to get up on that platform. Well, now, I have built my little platform on Christ. My own experience has made a very handsome erection, I can tell you. I have felt, "Well, I know this and that and the other by experience," and I have been quite exalted. Sometimes, too, I have built a platform of good works—"I have done something for Christ after all." The proud flesh says, "Oh yes, you really have performed something you might talk about if you liked." Self-confidence has piled my platform up and it has been a very respectable looking concern, and I have asked a few friends up. But, do you know what has occurred? Why, I have felt my platform shake. It began to tremble. Stress of weather had rotted the beams, and the supports have begun to give way, and I have seen all my building tumble down, and I have gone down with it; and as I have gone down with it I have thought, "It is all over with me now. I am going crash down, I do not know how far, but perhaps I shall fall to the bottom of the mountain." Instead of that I alighted on the top of the mountain. I did not fall very far, but came right down where it had been most sensible of me if I had always kept, namely, on *terra firma,* down on the solid earth. I have noticed that a great many of my brethren have been lately building some very pretty little wooden structures on the top of Jesus Christ. I think they call them "the higher life," if I rightly recollect the name. I do not know of any life that is higher than that of simple faith in Jesus Christ. As far as I am concerned, the highest life for me out of heaven is the life of a poor publican saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He that is down there will never fall, and he who keeps there is really as high up as the man who thinks he is all aloft; for all above living by faith in Christ is mere dream and moonshine. There is nothing higher, after all, than just being nobody, and Christ being everybody, and singing with poor Jack, the huckster,

> "I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
> But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

If you grow till you are less than nothing, you are full grown, but few have reached that stage; and if you grow till Christ is everything to you, you are in your prime; but, alas, how far short of this do most men fall! The Lord bring you to that highest of all growths—to be daily coming to Christ; always empty in yourself, but full in him: always weak in yourself, but strong in him; always nothing in self, but Christ your perpetual all in all! The Lord keep you there, brothers and sisters, and he will have praise and glory of you, both now and for ever. Amen.—[PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—I Peter ii. 1-16.]

YOUR PERSONAL SALVATION.

C. H. SPURGEON.

1 Peter i:9-12. Psalm cxix:41.

These two texts will be to me as a bow and a sword: the first for shooting the arrows of truth, and the second for close quarters in dealing with individual consciences. You will see the reason for the pair of texts as we proceed. May the Holy Spirit make use of both according to his own mind!

Last Sabbath-day I discoursed upon the God of salvation: this morning our principal object is to speak of that salvation itself. I then tried to show that God is always the same, and that the God of the Old Testament, unto whom belongeth the issues from death, is the God of our salvation still. My first text runs upon the same line, for it teaches us that the prophets of old, who spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit, testified concerning the same salvation which has been reported to us by the apostles as actually accomplished. There has been no new salvation; there has been a change in the messengers, but they have all spoken of one thing; and, though their tidings have been more clearly understood in these latter days, the substance of the good news is still the same. The Old Testament and the New are one, inspired by the same Spirit, and filled with the same subject, namely, the one promised Messiah. The prophets foretold what the apostles reported. The seers looked forward, and the evangelists look backward: their eyes meet at one place; they see eye to eye and both behold the cross.

First, I shall in much simplicity, with a vehement desire for the immediate conviction and salvation of my hearers, try to COMMEND THE SALVATION OF GOD by opening up what Peter has said in the verses before us.

Let me urge you to give earnest heed to the salvation of God, because *it is a salvation of grace.* The tenth verse says, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of *the grace that should come unto you.*" Salvation is altogether of grace, grace which comes from God in his mercy to man in his helplessness. The gospel does not come to you asking something of you, but its hands are laden with gifts more precious than gold, which it freely bestows upon guilty men. It comes to us, not as a reward for the obedient and deserving, but as a merciful boon for the disobedient and undeserving. It treats us, not upon the ground of justice, but upon terms of pure mercy. It asks no price and exacts no purchase; it comes as a benefactor, not as a judge. In the gospel God giveth liberally and upbraideth not. We are accustomed not only to say "grace," but "free grace." It has been remarked that this is a tautology. So it is, but it is a blessed one, for it makes the meaning doubly clear and leaves no room for mistake. "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Our good Physician has none but gratis patients. Since the boons which the God of all grace grants to sinful men are beyond all price, he does not barter and chaffer with them, but makes his blessings free as air. I am sure that if you feel yourselves to be guilty, the very idea of being saved by grace will have a charm for you. To a thirsty man the sound of a rippling stream is music,

and to a convinced conscience free pardon is as rivers of water in the wilderness. Oh, that all the world would listen when we have such a message to tell!

Again, your closest attention may well be asked to the salvation of God when you are told in the text that *it is by faith.* "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Salvation is not obtained by penances, painful and humiliating: nor by despondency and despair; nor by any effort, mental or spiritual, involving a purchase by labor and pain; but entirely and alone by faith, or trust, in the Lord Jesus. Do you ask—is it so, that salvation is by believing, simply believing? Such is the statement of the word of God. We proclaim it upon the warrant of infallible Scripture. "All that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." "He that believeth in him is not condemned." "He that believeth on him hath everlasting life."

The gospel of salvation ought to be regarded by you, *for it has engrossed the thoughts of prophets.* The text says, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." Those great men, the choice spirits of the ages which they adorned, were delighted to preach of this salvation as a blessing to be hereafter revealed. They did not themselves altogether understand what they were called to reveal, for the Holy Spirit often carried them beyond themselves and made them utter more than they understood. The inspiration of the Bible is verbal inspiration. In some cases it must have been only verbal; in every case it must have been mainly so. The human mind is not able to understand and to express all the thoughts of God, they are too sublime; and therefore God dictated to the prophets the very language which they should deliver,—language of which they themselves could not see the far-reaching meaning.

Furthermore, when prophecy had ceased, the Holy Spirit came upon another set of men of whom our text speaks. Peter says of these things, that they "are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." *The apostles followed the prophets in testifying to this salvation,* and with the apostles there was an honorable fellowship of earnest evangelists and preachers. I will not stay to point out to you the admirable character of these men, but I would beg you to observe that, having seen Christ Jesus for themselves personally, they were not deceived. Many of them had eaten and drank with him: all the apostles had done so: they had been with him in familiar intercourse, and they were resolute in bearing witness that they had seen him after he had risen from the dead.

Paul tells us that to principalities and powers in the heavenly places shall be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. For men to be lessons to angels, books for seraphs to read, is a strange fact. Perhaps the angelic inquirers ask such questions as this: How is God just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly? At first it must have been, I think, a wonder that he who said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," could have permitted man to live on and to have a hope of eternal life. How could he who saith that he will by no means clear the guilty yet bestow his favors upon guilty men? Angels wonder as they see how, through the substitution of Jesus Christ, God can be sternly just and yet abundantly gracious; but while they learn this they long to discover more of the truth wrapped up in the one great sacrifice: they peer and pry, and search and consider, and hence the doctrines of the gospel are spoken of as "things which the angels desire to look into." Ah, my careless hearer, I wish you were in the same plight as I was in once, when I was burdened with a sense of my transgressions. If you felt as I did, you would catch at that word "grace" right eagerly, and be delighted with the promise made to "faith." You would make up your mind that if prophets searched out salva-

tion, if apostles reported it, if angels longed to know it, you yourself would find it or perish in searching after it. Do you forget that you must have eternal life, or you are undone for ever? Do not trifle with your eternal interests! Do not be careless where earth and heaven are in earnest! Prophets, apostles, angels, all beckon you to seek the Lord. Awake, thou that sleepest! Arise, O sluggish soul! A thousand voices call thee to bestir thyself, and receive the grace which has come unto thee.

We have already gone a long way with this text, rising step by step. We have stood where angels gaze; now behold another wonder: we rise beyond them to the angels' Master. *Christ is the substance of this salvation.* For what saith the text? The prophets spake "beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Ah, there is the point. To save men Jesus suffered. The manhood and the Godhead of Christ endured anguish inconceivable. All through his life our Lord was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." His was the bravest heart that ever lived, and the gentlest spirit that ever breathed, but the most crushed and down-trodden.

The sufferings of his life must never be forgotten, but they were consummated by the agonies of his death. There was never such a death. Physically, it was equal in pain to the sufferings of any of the martyrs; but its peculiarity of excessive grief did not lie in his bodily sufferings: his soul-sufferings were the soul of his sufferings. Martyrs are sustained by the presence of their God, but Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That cry never came up from the stakes of Smithfield, or from the agonies of the Spanish *auto-da-fe,* for God was with his witnesses: but he was not with Christ. Here was the depth of his woe. Now, I pray you, if you will manifest some sign of thought and softness, remember that if the Son of God became a man that he might suffer to the death for men, it is hard that men should turn deaf ears to the salvation which he accomplished. I hear from his cross his sad complaint, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me." Oh, if you are born of woman, and have a heart that has any flesh about it, think well of the salvation, "the grace, which is brought unto you," by the sufferings of the Son of God.

One other step remains. It cannot be higher; it is on the same level, and I beseech you to stand upon it and think a while, you that have thought so little of yourselves and of your God. It is this. *The Holy Ghost is the witness to all this.* It was the Holy Ghost that spake in the prophets; it was the Holy Ghost who was with those who reported the gospel at the first; it is the same Holy Spirit who every day bears witness to Christ. Do you not know that we have miracles in the Christian church still? Scoffers come to us and say, "Work a miracle, and we will believe you." We do work these miracles every day. Had you been present at a meeting held here last month you would have heard something not far short of one hundred persons one after another assert that by the preaching of the gospel in this place lately their lives have been completely changed. In the case of some of these the change is very obvious to all persons acquainted with them.

II. So far have I commended my Lord's salvation, and now I would desire you, with all this in your own minds, to turn to the prayer in the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm: "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation according to thy word." Use the prayer with this intent:—Lord, I have been hearing what prophets and apostles and angels think of thy salvation, what thy Son and what thy Spirit think of it; now let me humbly say what I think of it: Oh that it were mine! Oh that it would come to me! This, then, is my second head. I would RECOMMEND THE PRAYER OF THE PSALMIST.

I will say about it, first, that *it is in itself a very gracious prayer,* for it is offered on right grounds. "Let *thy mercies* come also unto me." There is no mention of

merit or desert. His entreaty is for mercy only. He pleads guilty, and throws himself upon the prerogative of the king, who can pardon offenders. Are you willing, my dear hearer, you who have never sought the Savior, are you willing at this moment to stand on that ground, and to ask for salvation as the result of mercy? You shall have it on such terms, but you can never be saved until you will own that you are guilty and submit to justice. Observe the plural, "Let thy *mercies* come to me," as if David felt that he needed a double share of it, ay, a sevenfold measure of it. Elsewhere he cried, "According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgression." Our sense of sin leads us to use similar language. Lord, I need much mercy, manifold mercy, multiplied mercy, I want mercy upon mercy; I want forgiving mercy, I want regenerating mercy, I want mercy for the present as well as for the past, and I shall want mercy to keep me in the future if I am to be saved at all. Friend, set your plea on that ground. Multiplied sins crave multiplied mercies. "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord."

In the second place this prayer *may be supported by gracious arguments.* May the Spirit of God help you to plead them. I will suppose some poor heart painfully longing to use this prayer. Here are arguments for you. Pray like this. Say, "Lord, let thy mercy come to me, for I need mercy." Do not go on the tack of trying to show that you are good, because mercy will then pass you by. To argue merit is to plead against yourself. Whenever you say, "Lord, I am as good as other people; I try to do my best," and so on, you act as foolishly as if a beggar at your door should plead that he was not very badly off, not half so needy as others, and neither scantily fed nor badly clothed. This would be a new method of begging, and a very bad one.

Then you can put this to the good Savior. Tell him if he will give you his salvation, he will not be impoverished by the gift. "Lord, I am a thirsty soul; but thou art such a river that if I drink from thee there will be no fear of my exhausting thy boundless supply." They put up over certain little nasty, dirty ponds by the roadside, "No dogs may be washed here." Pity the dogs if they were! But no one put up such a notice on the banks of great, glorious Old Father Thames. You may wash your dogs if you like, and his flood will flow on; there is too much of it to be so readily polluted. So is it with the boundless mercy of God. God permits many a poor dog of a sinner to be washed in it, and yet it is just as full and efficacious as ever. You need not be afraid of enjoying too much sunlight, for the sun loses nothing by your basking in his beams. So is it with divine mercy, it can visit you, and bless you, and remain as great and glorious as ever.

You notice in the parable of the prodigal that the forlorn feeder of swine was the only son that had gone astray, and consequently the first that ever tried whether his father would receive him. The elder brother had not gone astray, and was there at home, to grumble at his younger brother; but the poor prodigal son, though he had no instance before him of his father's willingness to forgive, was bold to try by faith his father's heart. None had trodden that way before, yet he made bold to explore it. He felt that he should not be cast out. But when we hear any of you say, "I will arise, and go to my Father," scores of us are ready to leap out of our seats and cry, "Come along, brother, for we have come, and the gracious Father has received us." I do not know whether the elder brother is here to murmur at a pentitent sinner; I am happy to say I have none of his spirit. It will make my heart happy; the bells of my whole nature will ring for joy if I may only bring one of my poor, prodigal brothers back to my great Father's house. Oh, come along with you, and let this be the plea: "Thou hast received so many, O receive me." Cry, "Bless me, even me also, O my Father." The Lord has not come to the end of his mercy yet. Jesus has not come to the end of his saving work yet. There is room for you, and there will be

room for thousands upon thousands yet, until the Master of the house hath risen up and shut to the door. He has not risen up, nor closed the door as yet, and still his mercy cries, "Come to me, come to me, come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

ALL THINGS ARE READY. COME.

C. H. SPURGEON.

Come, for all things are now ready.—Luke xiv: 17.

This invitation was first of all made to the Jews, but it seems to me to have a peculiar appropriateness to ourselves.

And if all things could be said to be ready even in our Savior's day, we may say it with still greater emphasis now; for when he delivered this parable the Holy Spirit was not yet given, but Pentecost has now passed, and the Spirit of God abideth with us to accompany the word, to fill it with power and to bless our souls as we feed upon the truth. Very emphatically then at this time all things are now ready, and the supper awaits the guests. I pray you do not begin to make excuses, but be prepared to follow us when we bid you come, to go with us when we seek to bring you in, or at least to yield to our entreaties when with all the sacred violence of love we would compel you to come in. We will not grudge the use of all the three increasing modes of persuasion so long as you are but led to "Come, for all things are now ready."

There are two things clearly in the text, and these have a close relation to one another. A plain invitation—"Come," and then a forcible argument—"for all things are ready." The argument is fetched from the divine preparations, gathered from among the dainty viands of the royal feast. "My oxen and my fatlings are killed, come to the supper." The readiness of everything on God's part is the argument why men should come and partake of his grace; and that is the point upon which we will dwell at this time—the readiness of the feast of mercy is the reason why men should come to it at once.

I. We will begin our meditation by laying down the first statement which shall make our first division of discourse, namely, that it is God's habit to have all things ready, whether for his guests or his creatures. You never discover him to be behindhand in anything. When the guests come there is not a scramble to get the table arranged and the food prepared, but the Lord has great forethought, and every little point of detail is well arranged. "All things are ready."

It was so in creation. He did not create a single blade of grass upon the face of the earth until the soil and the atmosphere had been prepared for it, and until the kindly sun had learned to look down upon the earth. No creature had to wait in hungry mood while its food was growing; all things were ready: ready first for vegetation, and then afterwards for animal life. As for Adam, when God came to make him as his last and noblest work of creation, all things were ready. The world was first fitted up, and then the man who was to govern that world was placed in it.

In after times we may gather illustrations of the same truth from the ways of

God with men. The ark was first of all builded, and the various creatures were gathered into it, with all their necessary provender, for that strange voyage which they were about to take: and then the Lord said to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." "All things are ready, come," was his voice to the chosen eight as they entered into the ark.

Take another event in providence, such as the going down of Israel into Egypt. God had determined that Jacob and his seed should sojourn awhile in the land of Ham, but how wisely he prepared the whole matter. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, and Joseph was there upon the throne clothed with power to nourish them through the famine. Not into Egypt shall God's Israel go till all things are ready; and when all things are ready they will come out again with a high hand and an outstretched arm.

So was it when the tribes migrated into Canaan itself. God took them not to the promised land until all things were ready. Israel came to a country which was as the garden of the Lord, whose fruit might at once be enjoyed, for they ate of the old corn of the land almost as soon as they passed the Jordan. So you see "All things are ready" is a proclamation which the Lord has often in spirit made to those whom he chooses to bless.

Now the fact that in the great gospel supper all things are ready teaches us first, that *God's thoughts go before men's comings.* Jesus, the great sacrifice, is slain, the fountain for our cleansing is filled with blood; the Holy Spirit has been given, the word by which we are to be instructed is in our hands, and the light which will illuminate that sacred page is promised us through the Holy Ghost. Things promised ought to encourage us to come to Christ, but things already given ought to be irresistible attractions.

II. Our second statement is that this readiness should be an argument that his saints should come continually to him and find grace to help in every time of need. I have heard of some Christians who have said, "I do not feel in a proper frame of mind to pray." My brother, pray till you do. Some have said, "I do not think I shall go up to the house of God today, I feel so unhappy, so cast down." When shouldst thou go so much as then, in order that thou mayest find comfort?

Note the times when this truth ought to have power with you. All things are ready, therefore come to *the storehouse of divine promise.* Are you in spiritual poverty? Come and take what God has provided for you, for all things are yours, and all the blessings of the everlasting hills belong to all the people of God. Are you needing strength? There is a promise, "As thy days so shall thy strength be." It is ready, come and take it.

If at this time we feel strong promptings towards *communion* with Christ what a blessing it is that Christ is always ready to commune with his people. "Behold," saith he, "I stand at the door and knock." We think that *we* stand at the door and knock, but it is scarcely so; the greater truth with regard to his people is that Jesus asks for fellowship with us, and tells us that if we open the door, and that is all he bids his people do, he will enter in and sup with them, and they with him.

I think the same thought ought to cross our minds with regard to *every daily duty.* We wake up in the morning, but we do not know exactly what lies before us, for God's providence has constantly new revelations: but I like to think in the morning that all things are ready for my pathway through the day, that if I will go out to serve God in my ministry he has prepared some ear into which I am to drop a gracious word, and some heart in the furrows of which I shall sow some blessed seed effectually.

Yes, and if beyond the daily service of life we should feel a prompting to aspire to *a higher degree of holiness,* if we want to grow in grace and reach the fulness of

the stature of a man in Christ Jesus, all things are ready for us. No Christian can have a sacred ambition after holiness which the Lord is not prepared to fulfill.

III. The perfect readiness of the feast of divine mercy is evidently intended to be a strong argument with sinners why they should come at once. To the sinner, then, do I address myself.

Soul, dost thou desire eternal life? Is there within thy spirit a hungering and a thirsting after such things as may satisfy thy spirit and make thee live for ever? Then hearken while the Master's servant gives thee the invitation. "Come, for *all things* are ready,"—all, not some, but all. There is nothing that thou canst need between here and heaven but what is provided in Jesus Christ, in his person and in his work. All things are ready, life for thy death, forgiveness for thy sin, cleansing for thy filth, clothing for thy nakedness, joy for thy sorrow, strength for thy weakness, yea, more than all that ever thou canst want is stored up in the boundless nature and work of Christ.

And all things are *ready*, dwell on that word. All things are ready, just in the exact condition that thou needest them to be, just in such condition as shall be best for thy soul's comfort and enjoyment. All things are ready; nothing needs to be further mellowed or sweetened, everything is at the best that eternal love can make it.

But notice the word, "now," "All things are *now* ready"—just now, at this moment. At feasts, you know, the good housewife is often troubled if the guests come late. So doth the great householder lay stress upon this, all things are *now* ready, therefore come at once: he saith not that if thou wilt tarry for another seven years all things will then be ready.

And if they are ready *now*, the argument is come *now*, while still all things are ready. Delay is as unreasonable as it is wicked now that all things are ready.

Notice that all things were ready for those who were bidden. The fact of all things being ready proved that the invitation was a sincere one, although it was a rejected one. There are some who will not have us give an invitation to any but to those whom we believe are sure to come, nay, in a measure have come. O my dear hearers, if you do not come to Christ you will perish, but you will never be able to say you were not bidden, and that there was nothing ready for you. No, there stands the feast all spread, and you are sincerely and honestly bidden to come. God grant that you may come, and come at once.

IV. Now I am going to pass on to my fourth and last point, which may God bless to the comfort of some seeking soul. This text disposes of a great deal of talk about the sinner's readiness or unreadiness: because, if the reason why a sinner is to come is because all things are ready, then it is idle for him to say "But I am not ready." It is clear that all the readiness required on man's part is a willingness to come and receive the blessing which God has provided. There is nothing else necessary; if men are willing to come, they may come, they will come. All the fitness he requireth is that first you feel your need of him, and that secondly in feeling your need of him you are willing to come to him. Willingness to come is everything. The text does not say, "You are ready, therefore come;" that is a legal way of putting the gospel; but it says, "All things are ready, the gospel is ready, therefore you are to come."

Now notice that the unreadiness of those who were bidden arose out of their possessions and out of their abilities. One would not come because he had bought a piece of land. Some gentlemen have too many acres ever to come to Christ: they think too much of the world to think much of him. Many a man cannot come to Christ for all things because he has so much already. Thousands are kept away from grace by what they have and by what they can do. Emptiness is more preparatory

to a feast than fulness. How often does it happen that poverty and inability even help to lead the soul to Christ. When a man thinketh himself to be rich he will not come to the Savior. When a man dreameth that he is able at any time to repent and believe, and to do everything for himself that is wanted, he is not likely to come and by a simple faith repose in Christ. The possession of abilities and honors and riches keeps men from coming to the Redeemer.

But on the other hand personal condition does not constitute an unfitness for coming to Christ, for the sad condition of those who became guests did not debar them from the supper. Some were *poor*, and doubtless wretched and ragged. Their poverty did not prevent their being ready; and oh, poor soul, if thou be poor literally, or poor spiritually, neither sort of poverty can constitute an unfitness for divine mercy.

Another class of them were *maimed*, but not one of them was repulsed because of the ugly cuts he had received. So, poor soul, however Satan may have torn and lopped thee, and into whatsoever condition he may have brought thee, nevertheless this is no unfitness for coming; just as thou art thou mayest come to his table of grace. Moral disfigurements are soon rectified when Jesus takes the character in hand. Come thou to him, however sadly thou art injured by sin.

There were others who were *halt*, that is to say, they had lost a leg, or it was of no use to them, but nevertheless that was no reason why they were not welcome. Ah, if you find it difficult to believe, it is no reason why you should not come and receive the grand absolution which Jesus Christ is ready to bestow upon you. Lame with doubting and distrusting, nevertheless come to the supper and say, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Others were *blind* people, but in that case the messenger was not told to tell them to come, he was commanded to bring them, and a blind man can come if he is brought. Now you that cannot fully understand the gospel as you desire to do, that are puzzled and muddled, give your hand into the hand of Jesus, and be willing to be led, be willing to believe what you cannot comprehend, and to grasp in confidence that which you are not able yet to measure with your understanding. The blind, however ignorant or uninstructed they are, shall not be kept away because of that.

Then there were the men in the *highways*, I suppose they were beggars; and the men in the *hedges*, I suppose they were hiding, and were probably thieves; but though they were highwaymen and hedge-birds even that did not prevent their coming and finding welcome.

Now, lastly, I think it was the very thing, which in any one of these people looked like unfitness, which was a help to them. It is a great truth that what we regard as unfitness is often our truest fitness.

When a soul feels its own sinfulness, and wretchedness, and lost estate, it thinks itself unfit to come to Christ, but this is an assistance to it, since it prevents its looking to anything else but Christ, kills its excuses, and makes it free to accept salvation by grace.

Trust Jesus Christ, that is all, just as you are, with all your unfitness and unreadiness. Take what God has made ready for you, the precious blood to cleanse you, a robe of righteousness to cover you, eternal joy to be your portion. Receive the grace of God in Christ Jesus, oh receive it now! God grant you may, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen

JESUS ONLY.

C. H. SPURGEON.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.—Matthew xvii: 8.

The last words will suffice us for a text, "Jesus only." When Peter saw our Lord with Moses and Elias, he exclaimed, "Master, it is good to be here," as if he implied that it was better to be with Jesus, and Moses, and Elias, than to be with Jesus only. Now it was certainly good that for once in his life he should see Christ transfigured with the representatives of the law and the prophets; it might be for that particular occasion the best sight that he could see, but as an ordinary thing an ecstasy so sublime would not have been good for the disciples. Depend on it, brethren, that ravishing and exciting experiences and transporting enjoyments, though they may be useful as occasional refreshments, would not be so good for every day as that quiet but delightful ordinary fellowship with "Jesus only," which ought to be the distinguishing mark of all Christian life.

We shall first notice *what might have happened to the disciples after the transfiguration;* we shall then dwell on *what did happen;* and then, thirdly, we shall speak on *what we anxiously desire may happen to those who hear us this day.*

I. First, then what might have happened to the three disciples after they had seen the transfiguration.

There were four things any of which might have occurred. As a first supposition, *they* might have seen nobody with them on the holy mount; they might have found all gone but themselves. When the cloud had overshadowed them, and they were sore afraid, they might have lifted up their eyes and found the entire vision melted into thin air; no Moses, no Elias, and no Jesus. They would not have gone down the mountain side that day asking questions and receiving instruction, for they would have had no teacher left them. They would have gone down among Scribes and Pharisees to be baffled with their knotty questions, and to be defeated by their sophistries, for they would have had no wise man, who spake as never man spake, to untie the knots and disentangle the snarls of controversy.

There are some in this world, and we ourselves have been among them, to whom something like this has actually occurred. You have been under a sermon, or at a gospel ordinance, or in reading the word of God for awhile delighted, exhilarated, lifted up to the sublimer regions, and then afterwards when it has all been over, there has been nothing left of joy or benefit, nothing left of all that was preached and for the moment enjoyed, nothing, at any rate, that you could take with you into the conflicts of every-day life. The whole has been a splendid vision and nothing more. There has been neither Moses, nor Elias, nor Jesus left. You did remember what you saw, but only with regret, because nothing remained with you. And, indeed, this which happens sometimes to us, is a general habit of that portion of this ungodly world which hears the gospel and perceives not its reality; it listens with respect to gospel histories as to legends of ancient times; it hears with reverence the stories of the days of miracles; it venerates the far-off ages and their heroic deeds, but it does

not believe that anything is left of all the vision, anything for today, for common life, and for common men. Moses it knows, and Elias it knows, and Christ it knows, as shadows that have passed across the scene and have disappeared, but it knows nothing of any one of these as abiding in permanent influence over the mind and spirit of the present. As we go about our life work may our religion be a matter of fact, a walking with the living and abiding Savior. Though Moses may be gone, and Elias may be gone, yet Jesus Christ abideth with us and in us, and we in him, and so shall it be evermore.

Now, there was a second thing that might have happened to the disciples. When they lifted up their eyes *they might have seen Moses only.*

There are too many who see Moses only, inasmuch as they see nothing but law, nothing but duty and precept in the Bible. I know that some here, though we have tried to preach Christ crucified as their only hope, yet whenever they read the Bible, or hear the gospel, feel nothing except a sense of their own sinfulness, and, arising out of that sense of sinfulness, a desire to work out a righteousness of their own. They are continually measuring themselves by the law of God, they feel their shortcomings, they mourn over their transgressions, but they go no further. Oh, how blessed is it to escape from the voice of command and threatening and come to the blood of sprinkling, where "Jesus only" speaketh better things!

They had a better vision once, they have it sometimes now; for now and then under the preaching of the gospel they have glimpses of hope and mercy, but they relapse into darkness, they fall again into despair, because they have chosen to see Moses only. I pray that a change may come over the spirit of their dream, and that yet like the apostles they may see "Jesus only."

But, my brethren, there was a third alternative that might have happened to the disciples, *they might have seen Elijah only.* Instead of the gentle Savior, they might have been standing at the side of the rough-clad and the stern-spirited Elias. Elias may be taken representatively as the preparer of Christ, for our Lord interpreted the prophecy of the coming of Elias as referring to John the Baptist. There are not a few who abide in the seeking, repenting, and preparing state, and come not to "Jesus only." Their souls are rent and torn by Elijah's challenge, "If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him;" but they remain still halting between two opinions, trembling before Elias and not rejoicing before the Savior. At the girdle of John the Baptist the keys of heaven did never hang; Elias is not the door of salvation. Only by faith in Jesus can you be saved, but complaining of yourselves is not faith. "Jesus only" is the way, the truth, and the life. "Jesus only" is the sinner's Savior. O that your eyes may be opened, not to see Elias, not to see Moses, but to see "Jesus only!"

You see, then, these three alternatives, but there was also another: a fourth thing might have happened when the disciples opened their eyes—*they might have seen Moses and Elias with Jesus,* even as in the transfiguration. At first sight it seems as if this would have been superior to that which they did enjoy. But, inasmuch as every man prefers the noon to midnight and to the twilight of dawn, the disappearance of Moses and Elias, indicating the full noontide of light, was the best thing that could happen. Why should we wish to see Moses? The ceremonials are all fulfilled in Jesus; let Moses go, his light is already in "Jesus only." And why should I wish to retain Elias? The prophecies are all fulfilled in Jesus; let, then, Elias go, his light also is in "Jesus only." It is better to see Moses and Elias *in* Christ, than to see Moses and Elias *with* Christ. The absence of some things betokens a higher state of things than their presence. In all my library I do not know that I have a Lennie's English Grammar, or a Mavor's Spelling Book, or a Henry's First Latin Exercises, nor do I regret the absence of those valuable works, because I have got beyond the need

of them. So the Christian wants not the symbols of Moses, or the preparations of Elias, for Christ is all, and we are complete in him. And as you grow in grace you will find that many doctrines and points of church government which once appeared to you to be all important, though you will still value them, will seem but of small consequence compared with Christ himself. Like the traveler ascending the Alps to reach the summit of Mont Blanc; at first he observes that lord of the hills as one horn among many, and often in the twistings of his upward path he sees other peaks which appear more elevated than that monarch of mountains; but when at last he is near the summit, he sees all the rest of the hills beneath his feet, and like a mighty wedge of alabaster Mont Blanc pierces the very clouds. So, as we grow in grace, other things sink and Jesus rises. They must decrease, but Christ must increase; until he alone fills the full horizon of your soul, and rises clear and bright and glorious up into the very heaven of God. O that we may thus see "Jesus only!"

II. We must now speak upon what really happened.

"They saw no man, save Jesus only." This was all they wanted to see for *their comfort.* They were sore afraid: Moses was gone, and he could give them no comfort; Elias was gone, he could speak no consolatory word; yet when Jesus said, "Be not afraid," their fears vanished. All the comfort, then, that any troubled heart wants, it can find in Christ. Go not to Moses, nor Elias, neither to the old covenant, nor to prophecy: go straight away to Jesus only. He was all the *Savior* they wanted.

He, again, was to them, as they went afterwards into the world enough for *a Master.* "One is our Master," and that one is enough, for we have learned to see the wisdom of God and the power of God in Jesus only.

He was enough as *their power* for future life, as well as their Master. They needed not ask Moses to lend them official dignity, nor to ask Elias to bring them fire from heaven, Jesus would give them of his Holy Spirit, and they should be strong enough for every enterprise. And, brethren, all the power you and I want to preach the gospel, and to conquer souls to the truth, we can find in Jesus only.

For "Jesus only" shall be *our reward,* to be with him where he is, to behold his glory, to be like him when we shall see him as he is, we ask no other heaven.

Let us now think of what we desire may happen to all now present.

I do desire for my fellow Christians and for myself, that more and more the great object of our thoughts, motives, and acts may be "Jesus only." I believe that whenever our religion is most vital it is most full of Christ. Moreover, when it is most practical, downright, and common sense, it always gets nearest to Jesus. In fine, I find if I want to labor much, I must live on Jesus only; if I desire to suffer patiently, I must feed on Jesus only; if I wish to wrestle with God successfully, I must plead Jesus only; if I aspire to conquer sin, I must use the blood of Jesus only; if I pant to learn the mysteries of heaven, I must seek the teachings of Jesus only.

O look to him, and though it be Jesus only, though Moses should condemn you, and Elias should alarm you, yet "Jesus only" shall be enough to comfort and enough to save you. May God grant us grace every one of us to take for our motto in life, for our hope in death, and for our joy in eternity, "Jesus only!" May God bless you for the sake of "Jesus only!" Amen.

FAITH: WHAT IS IT? HOW CAN IT BE OBTAINED?

C. H. SPURGEON.

By grace are ye saved through faith.—Ephesians ii: 8.

I mean to dwell mainly upon that expression, "Through faith." I call attention, however, first of all, to the fountain head of our salvation, which is the grace of God. "By grace are ye saved." Because God is gracious, therefore sinful men are forgiven, converted, purified, and saved. It is not because of anything in them, or that ever can be in them, that they are saved, but because of the boundless love, goodness, pity, compassion, mercy, and grace of God. We are saved "through faith," but it is "by grace." Sound forth those words as with the archangel's trumpet: "By grace are ye saved."

Faith occupies the position of a channel or conduit-pipe. Grace is the fountain and the stream: faith is the aqueduct along which the flood of mercy flows down to refresh the thirsty sons of men. It is a great pity when the aqueduct is broken. It is a sad sight to see around Rome the many noble aqueducts which no longer convey water into the city, because the arches are broken and the marvelous structures are in ruins. The aqueduct must be kept entire to convey the current; and, even so, faith must be true and sound, leading right up to God and coming right down to ourselves, that it may become a serviceable channel of mercy to our souls. Still, I again remind you that faith is the channel or aqueduct, and not the fountain head, and we must not look so much to it as to exalt it above the divine source of all blessing which lies in the grace of God. The righteousness of faith is not the moral excellence of faith, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ which faith grasps and appropriates. The peace within the soul is not derived from the contemplation of our own faith, but it comes to us from him who is our peace, the hem of whose garment faith touches, and virtue comes out of him into the soul.

However, it is a very important thing that we look well to the channel, and we will consider: Faith, *what is it?* Faith, *why is it selected as the channel of blessing?* Faith, *how can it be obtained and increased?*

I. Faith, what is it? What is this faith concerning which it is said, "By grace are ye saved *through faith*"?

What is faith? *It is made up of three things—knowledge, belief, and trust. Knowledge* comes first. "Faith cometh by hearing": we must first hear, in order that we may know what is to be believed. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." A measure of knowledge is essential to faith: hence the importance of getting knowledge. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live,"—such was the word of the ancient prophet, and it is the word of the gospel still. Search the scriptures and learn what the Holy Spirit teacheth concerning Christ and his salvation. Seek to know God,—"that God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Know God, know his gospel, and know especially Christ Jesus the Son of God. Endeavor to know more and more of Christ. After Paul had been converted more than twenty years, he tells the Philippians that he desired to know Christ; and depend upon it, the more we know Jesus, the more we shall wish to know of him, that so our faith in him may increase. Faith, then, begins with knowledge;

hence the value of being taught in divine truth; for to know Christ is life eternal.

Then the mind goes on to *believe* that these things are true. The soul believes that God is, and that he hears the cries of sincere hearts; that the gospel is from God; that justification by faith is the grand truth that God hath revealed in these last days by his spirit more clearly than before. Then the heart believes that Jesus is verily and in truth our God and Savior, the Redeemer of men, the prophet, priest, and king unto his people. So far you have made an advance towards faith, and one more ingredient is needed to complete it, which is *trust.* Commit yourself to the merciful God; rest your hope on the gracious gospel; trust your soul on the dying and living Savior; wash away your sins in the atoning blood; accept his perfect righteousness, and all is well. Trust is the life-blood of faith: there is no saving faith without it. Faith is not a blind thing; for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing; for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing; for faith trusts, and stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation.

Faith is believing that Christ is what he is said to be, that he will do what he has promised to do, and expecting this of him. The testimony of God the Father is "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." This also is testified by God the Holy Spirit; for the Spirit has borne witness to Christ, both by the word and by divers miracles, and by his working in the hearts of men. We are to believe this testimony to be true.

Faith also believes that Christ will do what he has promised; that if he has promised to cast out none that come to him, it is certain that he will not cast us out if we come to him. Whatever Christ has promised to do he will do, and we must believe this so as to look for pardon, justification, preservation, and eternal glory from his hands, according as he has promised.

Then comes the next necessary step. Jesus is what he is said to be, Jesus will do what he says he will do; therefore we must each one *trust him,* saying, "He will be to me what he says he is, and he will do to me what he has promised to do; I leave myself in the hands of him who is appointed to save, that he may save me. I rest upon his promise that he will do even as he has said." This is a saving faith, and he that hath it hath everlasting life. Whatever his dangers and difficulties, whatever his darkness and depression, whatever his infirmities and sins, he that believeth thus on Christ Jesus is not condemned, and shall never come into condemnation.

Sometimes faith is little more than a simple *clinging* to Christ: a sense of dependence, and a willingness so to depend. When you are down at the seaside, you will see the limpet sticking to the rock; you walk with a soft tread up to the rock with your walking stick and strike the limpet with a rapid blow, and off he comes. Try the next limpet. You have given him warning; he heard the blow, and he clings with all his might. Our little friend, the limpet, does not know much, but he clings. He cannot tell us much about what he is clinging to, he is not acquainted with the geological formation of the rock, but he clings. He has found something to cling to, that is his little bit of knowledge, and he uses it by clinging to the rock of his salvation; it is the limpet's life to cling. Thousands of God's people have no more faith than this; they know enough to cling to Jesus with all their heart and soul, and this suffices.

Another form of faith is this, in which a man depends upon another from a knowledge of the superiority of that other, and *follows* him. A blind man trusts himself with his guide because he knows that his friend can see, and trusting, he walks where his guide conducts him. This is as good an image of faith as well can be; we know that Jesus has about him merit, and power, and blessing which we do not possess, and therefore we gladly trust ourselves to him, and he never betrays our confidence.

Another and a higher form of faith is that faith which *grows out of love.*

Faith also *realizes* the presence of the living God and Savior, and thus it breeds in the soul a beautiful calm and quiet.

Faith, is to be a child towards Christ, believing in him as a real and present person, at this very moment near us, and ready to bless us. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Faith takes Christ at his word, as a child believes his father, and trusts him in all simplicity with past, present, and future.

A firm form of *faith arises out of assured knowledge;* this comes of growth in grace, and is the faith which believes Christ because it knows him, trusts him because it has proved him to be infallibly faithful.

This is the faith which makes it easy *to commit our soul and all its eternal interests into the Savior's keeping.* We who know Christ are glad to place our whole being in his hands, knowing that he is able to keep us even unto the end.

II. We shall now inquire, why faith is selected as the channel of salvation? "By grace are ye saved *through faith.*" Faith has been selected as the channel of grace because *there is a natural adaptation* in faith to be used as the receiver.

Faith, again, is doubtless selected because *it gives all the glory to God.* It is of faith that it might be by grace, and it is of grace that there may be no boasting; for God cannot endure pride.

Next, God selects faith as the channel of salvation because *it is a sure method, linking man with God.* Faith saves us because it makes us cling to God, and so brings us into connection with him. Years ago above the Falls of Niagara a boat was upset, and two men were being carried down the current, when persons on the shore managed to float a rope out to them, which rope was seized by them both. One of them held fast to it and was safely drawn to the bank; but the other, seeing a great log come floating by, unwisely let go the rope and clung to the log, for it was the bigger thing of the two, and apparently better to cling to. Alas, the log with the man on it, went right over the vast abyss, because there was no union between the log and the shore. The size of the log was no benefit to him who grasped it; it needed a connection with the shore to produce safety. Faith, though it may seem to be like a slender cord, is in the hand of the great God on the shore side; infinite power pulls in the connecting line, and thus draws the man from destruction.

Faith is chosen, again, because *it touches the springs of action.* Columbus discovered America because he believed that there was another continent beyond the ocean: many another grand deed has also been born of faith, for faith works wonders.

Faith, again, *has the power of working by love;* it touches the secret spring of the affections, and draws the heart towards God.

Moreover, *faith creates peace and joy;* he that hath it rests, and is tranquil, is glad, and joyous; and this is a preparation for heaven. God gives all the heavenly gifts to faith, because faith worketh in us the very life and spirit which are to be eternally manifested in the upper and better world.

III. We close with the third point: How can we obtain and increase our faith? A very earnest question this to many. They say they want to believe but cannot. "What am I to do in order to believe?" The shortest way is to believe, and if the Holy Spirit has made you honest and candid, you will believe as soon as the truth is set before you. Anyhow, the gospel command is clear: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

But still, *if you have a difficulty, take it before God in prayer.* Tell the great Father exactly what it is that puzzles you, and beg him by his Holy Spirit to solve

the question. The Lord is willing to make himself known; go to him, and see if it be not so.

Furthermore, if faith seem difficult, it is possible that God the Holy Spirit will enable you to believe if you *hear very frequently and earnestly that which you are commanded to believe.* We believe many things because we have heard them so often. I should not wonder but what God often blesses this method, for it is written, "Faith cometh by hearing."

I would add next, *consider the testimony of others.* The Samaritans believed because of what the woman told them concerning Jesus. Many of our beliefs arise out of the testimony of others. Listen, then, to those who tell you how they were saved, how they were pardoned, how they have been changed in character: if you will but listen you will find that somebody just like yourself has been saved. As you listen to one after another of those who have tried the word of God, and proved it, the divine spirit will lead you to believe. So, mayhap, while you see others believe, and notice their joy and peace, you will yourself be gently led to believe. It is one of God's ways of helping us to faith.

A better plan still is this,—*note the authority upon which you are commanded to believe,* and this will greatly help you. The authority is not mine, or you might well reject it. It is not even the pope's, or you might even reject that. But you are commanded to believe upon the authority of God himself. *He* bids you believe in Jesus Christ, and you must not refuse to obey your Maker. The foreman of a certain works in the north had often heard the gospel, but he was troubled with the fear that he might not come to Christ. His good master one day sent a card round to the works—"Come to my house immediately after work." The foreman appeared at his master's door, and the master came out, and said somewhat roughly, "What do you want, John, troubling me at this time? Work is done, what right have you here?" "Sir," said he, "I had a card from you saying that I was to come after work." "Do you mean to say that merely because you had a card from me you are to come up to my house and call me out after business hours?" "Well, sir," replied the foreman, "I do not understand you, but it seems to me that, as you sent for me, I had a right to come," "Come in, John," said his master, "I have another message that I want to read to you," and he sat down and read these words—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Do you think after such a message from Christ that you can be wrong in going to him?" The poor man saw it all at once, and believed, because he saw that he had good warrant and authority for believing. So have you, poor soul; you have good authority for coming to Christ, for the Lord himself bids you trust him.

If that does not settle you, *think over what it is that you have to believe,*—that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the room and place and stead of men, and is able to save all who trust him. Why, this is the most blessed fact that ever men were told to believe: the most suitable, the most comforting, the most divine truth that ever was set before men.

If that does not do, then *think upon the person of Jesus Christ*—think of who he is and what he did, and where he is now, and what he is now; think often and deeply. When he, even such an one as he, bids you trust him, surely then your heart will be persuaded. For how can you doubt *him?*

If none of these things avail, then there is something wrong about you altogether, and my last word is, *submit yourself to God!* I believe that never did a soul throw up its hands in self-despair, and cry, "Lord, I yield," but what faith became easy to it before long. Yield to your God, and then shall you sweetly believe in your Savior. God bless you, for Christ's sake, and bring you at this very moment to believe in the Lord Jesus. Amen.

SALVATION BY WORKS, A CRIMINAL DOCTRINE.

C. H. SPURGEON.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.—Galatians ii: 21.

The idea of salvation by the merit of our own works is exceedingly *insinuating.* It matters not how often it is refuted, it asserts itself again and again; and when it gains the least foothold it soon makes great advances. Hence Paul, who was determined to show it no quarter, opposed everything which bore its likeness. He fought always for salvation by grace through faith, and contended strenuously against all thought of righteousness by obedience to the precepts of the ceremonial or the moral law.

The error of salvation by works is exceedingly *plausible.* You will constantly hear it stated as a self-evident truth, and vindicated on account of its supposed practical usefulness, while the gospel doctrine of salvation by faith is railed at and accused of evil consequences. It is affirmed that if we preach salvation by good works we shall encourage virtue; and so it might seem in theory, but history proves by many instances that as a matter of fact where such doctrine has been preached virtue has become singularly uncommon, and that in proportion as the merit of works has been cried up, morality has gone down. On the other hand, where justification by faith has been preached, conversions have followed, and purity of life has been produced even in the worst of men.

Self-righteousness is *natural to our fallen humanity.* Hence it is the essence of all false religions. Be they what they may, they all agree in seeking salvation by our own deeds. He who worships his idols will torture his body, will fast, will perform long pilgrimages, and do or endure anything in order to merit salvation. The Romish Church holds up continually before the eyes of its votaries the price to be earned by self-denial, by penance, by prayers, or by sacraments, or by some other performances of man.

This erroneous idea *arises partly from ignorance,* for men are ignorant of the law of God, and of what holiness really is. If they knew that even an evil thought is a breach of the law, and that the law once broken in any point is altogether violated, they would be at once convinced that there can be no righteousness by the law to those who have already offended against it. They are also in great ignorance concerning themselves, for those very persons who talk about self-righteousness are as a rule openly chargeable with fault; and if not, were they to sit down and really look at their own lives, they would soon perceive even in their best works such impurity of motive beforehand, or such pride and self-congratulation afterwards, that they would see the gloss taken off from all their performances, and they would be utterly ashamed of them. Nor is it ignorance alone which leads men to self-righteousness, they are also deceived by *pride.* Man cannot endure to be saved on the footing of mercy; he loves not to plead guilty and throw himself on the favor of the great King; he cannot brook to be treated as a pauper, and blessed as a matter of charity; he desires to have a finger in his own salvation, and claim at least a little credit for it.

May God deliver us from exalting self; and yet we cannot be delivered from so doing if we hold in any degree the doctrine of salvation by our own good works.

At this time I desire to shoot at the very heart of that soul-destroying doctrine, while I show you, in the first place, that *two great crimes are contained in the idea of self-justification.* When I have brought forth that indictment, I shall further endeavor to show that *these two great crimes are committed by many,* and then, thirdly, it will be a delight to assert that *the true believer does not fall into these crimes.*

I. First, then, two great crimes are contained in self-righteousness. These high crimes and misdemeanors are frustrating the grace of God, and making Christ to have died in vain.

The first is *the frustration of the grace of God.* The word here translated "frustrate" means to make void, to reject, to refuse, to regard as needless. Now, *he that hopes to be saved by his own righteousness rejects the grace or free favor of God, regards it as useless, and in that sense frustrates it.* It is clear, first, that if righteousness come by the law, the grace of God is no longer required. The man who believes that by keeping the law, or by practicing ceremonies, or by undergoing religious performances, he can make himself acceptable before God, most decidedly puts the grace of God on one side as a superfluous thing as far as he is concerned. Is it not clearly so? And is not this a crimson crime—this frustration of the grace of God?

Next, *he makes the grace of God to be at least a secondary thing,* which is only a lower degree of the same error. Many think that they are to merit as much as they can by their own exertions, and then the grace of God will make up for the rest.

More than that, he who trusts in himself, his feelings, his works, his prayers, or in anything except the grace of God, *virtually gives up trusting in the grace of God altogether:* for be it known unto you, that God's grace will never share the work with man's merit. The apostle saith in Romans xi: 6, "If by grace, then it is no more the works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

This is another form of this crime, that when men preach up human doings, sufferings, feelings, or emotions as the ground of salvation, *they take off the sinner from confidence in Christ,* for as long as a man can maintain any hope in himself he will never look to the Redeemer. No man can lay another foundation than that which is laid, but inasmuch as they try to do so they are guilty of despising the foundation of God as much as those builders of the olden time who rejected the stone which God had chosen to be the head of the corner.

This hoping to be saved by our own righteousness *robs God of his glory.* It as good as says, "We want no grace; we need no free favor." It reads of the new covenant which infinite love has made, but by clinging to the old covenant it puts dishonor upon it.

The second great crime which self-justification commits is *making Christ to be dead in vain. This is plain enough.* If salvation can be by the works of the law, why did our Lord Jesus die to save us? Will any dare to say that thy death, O incarnate God, was a superfluity, a wanton waste of suffering? Do they dare think thee a generous but unwise enthusiast whose death was needless? Can there be any who think thy cross a vain thing? Yes, thousands virtually do this, and, in fact, all do so who make it out that men might have been saved in some other way, or may now be saved by their own willings and doings.

The doctrine of salvation by works is a sin against all the fallen sons of Adam, for if men cannot be saved except by their own works what hope is left for any transgressor? You shut the gates of mercy on mankind; you condemn the guilty to die without the possibility of remission. You deny all hope of welcome to the return-

ing prodigal, all prospects of Paradise to the dying thief. If heaven be by works, thousands of us will never see its gates.

II. I will say no more concerning the nature of these sins, but in the second place proceed to the solemn fact that these two great crimes are committed by many people. I am afraid they are committed by some who hear me this day. Let everyone search himself and see if these accursed things be not hidden in his heart, and if they be, let him cry unto God for deliverance from them.

Assuredly these crimes are chargeable on *those who trifle with the gospel.* Here is the greatest discovery that was ever made, the most wonderful piece of knowledge that ever was revealed, and yet you do not think it worth a thought. What, my friend, does your indifference say that the grace of God is of no great value in your esteem? You do not think it worth the trouble of prayer, of Bible-reading, and attention. To be saved by the atoning blood does not strike you as being half so important as to carry on your business at a profit and acquire a fortune for your family. By thus trifling with these precious things you do, as far as you can, frustrate the grace of God and make Christ to die in vain.

Another set of people who do this are *those who have no sense of guilt.* Perhaps they are naturally amiable, civil, honest, and generous people, and they think that these natural virtues are all that is needed. We have many such, in whom there is much that is lovely, but the one thing needful is lacking.

They have as far as they could by their proud opinion of themselves made void the grace of God, and declared that Christ died in vain.

Another sort of people are *those who despair,* who often cry, "I know I cannot be saved except by grace, for I am such a great sinner; but, alas, I am too great a sinner to be saved at all. I am too black for Christ to wash out my sins." Ah, my dear friend, though you know it not, you are making void the grace of God, by denying its power and limiting its might. Take heed of despondency, for if thou dost not trust him thou wilt make void his grace.

And so, once more, do *those also who apostatize.* Do I speak to any here who were once professors of religion, who once used to offer prayer in the assembly, who once walked as saints, but now have gone back, breaking the Sabbath, forsaking the house of God, and living in sin? You, my friend, say by your course of life,—"I had the grace of God, but I do not care about it: it is worth nothing. I have rejected it, I have given it up: I have made it void: I have gone back to the world." You do as good as say, "I did once trust in Jesus Christ, but he is not worth trusting." You have denied him, you have sold your Lord and Master.

III. On my third point I shall carry with me the deep convictions, and the joyful confidences, of all true believers. It is this, that no true believer will be guilty of these crimes. In his very soul he loathes these infamous sins.

First of all, *no believer in Christ can bear to think of the frustrating of the grace of God or the making of it void.* Do you trust in grace alone, or do you in some measure rest in yourselves? Your almsgivings, your prayers, your tears, your suffering persecution, your gifts to the church, your earnest work in the Sunday-school or elsewhere—did you ever think of putting these side by side with the blood of Christ as your hope? No, you never dreamed of it; I am sure you never did, and the mention of it is utterly loathsome to you: is it not? Grace, grace, grace is your sole hope.

The true believer is also free from the second crime: *he does not make Christ to be dead in vain.* No, no, no, he trusts in the death of Christ; he puts his sole and entire reliance upon the great Substitute who loved and lived and died for him. The longer we live, I trust, dear brethren, the more we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We are struck with admiration at the wisdom of the way by which

a substitute was introduced,—that God might smite sin and yet spare the sinner; we are lost in admiration at the matchless love of God, that he spared not his own Son; we are filled with reverent adoration at the love of Christ, that when he knew the price of pardon was his blood, his pity ne'er withdrew. What is more, we not only joy in Christ, but we feel an increasing oneness with him. We are one with him, and being one with him we realize more every day that he did not die in vain. His death *has* bought us real life; death *has* already set us free from the bondage of sin, and *has* even now brought us deliverance from the fear of eternal wrath. His death has bought us life eternal, has bought us sonship and all the blessings that go with it, which the Fatherhood of God takes care to bestow; the death of Christ has shut the gates of hell for us, and opened the gates of heaven; the death of Christ has wrought for us mercies, not visionary or imaginary, but real and true, which this very day we do enjoy, and so we are in no danger of thinking that Christ died in vain.

These are the two principles. The grace of God cannot be frustrated, and Jesus Christ died not in vain. These two principles I think lie at the bottom of all sound doctrine. *The grace of God cannot be frustrated after all.* Its eternal purpose will be fulfilled, its sacrifice and seal shall be effectual: the chosen ones of grace shall be brought to glory. And as grace cannot be frustrated, so *Christ did not die in vain.* Some seem to think that there were purposes in Christ's heart which will never be accomplished. We have not so learned Christ. What he died to do shall be done; those he bought he will have; those he redeemed shall be free; there shall be no failure of reward for Christ's wondrous work: he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. On these two principles I throw back my soul to rest. Believing in his grace that grace shall never fail me. "My grace is sufficient for thee," saith the Lord, and so shall it be.

THE GREAT ARBITRATION CASE.

C. H. SPURGEON.

Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.—Job ix: 33.

The patriarch Job, when reasoning with the Lord concerning his great affliction, felt himself to be at a disadvantage and declined the controversy, saying, "He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment." Yet feeling that his friends were cruelly mis-stating his case, he still desired to spread it before the Lord, but wished for a mediator, a middleman, to act as umpire and decide the case. In his mournful plight he sighed for an arbitrator who, while dealing justly for God, would at the same time deal kindly with poor flesh and blood, being able to lay his hand upon both. But, dear friends, what Job desired to have, the Lord has provided for us in the person of his own dear Son, Jesus Christ. We cannot say with Job that there is no daysman who can lay his hand upon both, because there is now "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

Man has sinned; he has broken God's law in every part of it, and has wantonly cast off from him the allegiance which was due to his Maker and his King. God is

the great plaintiff against his sinful creatures who are the defendants. If that suit be carried into court, it must go against the sinner. But the infinite grace of God proposes an arbitration, and I trust there are many here who are not anxious to have their suit carried into court, but are willing that the appointed daysman should stand betwixt them and God, and lay his hand upon both, and propose and carry out a plan of reconciliation.

Let me begin *by describing the essentials of an arbitrator, or daysman;* then let me *take you into the arbitrator's court and show you his proceedings;* and then for a little time, if there be space enough, let us dwell upon *the happy success of our great Daysman.*

I. First of all, let me describe what are the essentials of an umpire, an arbitrator, or a daysman.

The first essential is, that *both parties should be agreed to accept him.* God has accepted Christ Jesus to be his umpire in his dispute. He appointed him to the office, and chose him for it before he laid the foundations of the world. Now, what thinkest thou? God has accepted him; canst thou agree with God in this matter, and agree to take Christ to be thy daysman too? Art thou willing that he should take this case into his hands and arbitrate between thee and God? for if God accepteth him, and thou accept him too, then he has one of the first qualifications for being a daysman.

But, in the next place, *both parties must be fully agreed to leave the case entirely in the arbitrator's hands.* If the arbitrator does not possess the power of settling the case, then pleading before him is only making an opportunity for wrangling, without any chance of coming to a peaceful settlement. Now God has committed "all power" into the hands of his Son. If the case be settled by him, the Father is agreed. Now, sinner, does grace move thy heart to do the same? Wilt thou agree to put thy case into the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man? Wilt thou abide by his decision? If so, then Christ has another essential of an arbitrator; but if not, remember, though he may make peace for others, he will never make peace for thee.

Further, let us say, that to make a good arbitrator or umpire, *it is essential that he be a fit person.* If the case were between a king and a beggar, it would not seem exactly right that another king should be the arbitrator, nor another beggar; but if there could be found a person who combined the two, who was both prince and beggar, then such a man could be selected by both. Our Lord Jesus Christ precisely meets the case. There is a very great disparity between the plaintiff and the defendant, for how great is the gulf which exists between the eternal God and poor fallen man! How is this to be bridged? Why by none except by one who is God and who at the same time can become man. Now the only being who can do this is Jesus Christ.

Yet there is one more essential of an umpire, and that is, that *he should be a person desirous to bring the case to a happy settlement.* In the great case which is pending between God and the sinner, the Lord Jesus Christ has a sincere anxiety both for his Father's glory and for the sinner's welfare, and that there should be peace between the two contending parties. It is the life and aim of Jesus Christ to make peace.

Thou seest then, sinner, how the case is. God has evidently chosen the most fitting arbitrator. That arbitrator is willing to undertake the case, and thou mayest well repose all confidence in him; but and if thou shalt live and die without accepting him as thine arbitrator, then, the case going against thee, thou wilt have none to blame but thyself.

II. And now I shall want, by your leave, to take you into the court where the trial is going on, and show you the legal proceedings before the great Daysman.

"The man, Christ Jesus," who is "God over all, blessed for ever," opens his court *by laying down the principles upon which he intends to deliver judgment,* and those

principles I will now try to explain and expound. They are two-fold—first, *strict justice;* and secondly, *fervent love.*

The arbitrator has determined that let the case go as it may *there shall be full justice done,* justice to the very extreme, whether it be for or against the defendant. Either way, whether it be in favor of the plaintiff or of the defendant, the condition of judgment is to be strict justice.

But the arbitrator also says that he will judge according to the second rule, that of *fervent love.* He loves his Father, and therefore he will decide on nothing that may attaint his honor or disgrace his crown. On the other hand, he so loves the poor defendant, man, that he will be willing to do anything rather than inflict penalty upon him unless justice shall absolutely require it.

Having thus laid down the principles of judgment, the arbitrator *next calls upon the plaintiff to state his case.* Let us listen while the great Creator speaks: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seen of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." The Eternal God charges us, and let me confess at once most justly and most truly charges us, with having broken all his commandments—some of them in act, some of them in word, all of them in heart, and thought, and imagination. The great Plaintiff claims that inasmuch as we are his creatures we ought to have obeyed him, that inasmuch as we owe our very lives to his daily care we ought to have rendered him service instead of disobedience, and to have been his loyal subjects instead of turning traitors to his throne. All this, calmly and dispassionately, according to the great Book of the law, is laid to our charge before the Daysman.

The plaintiff's case having thus been stated *the defendant is called upon by the Daysman for his;* and I think I hear him as he begins. First of all the trembling defendant sinner pleads—*"I confess to the indictment, but I say I could not help it. I have sinned, it is true, but my nature was such that I could not well do otherwise; I must lay all the blame of it to my own heart; my heart was deceitful and my nature was evil."* The Daysman at once rules that this is no excuse whatever, but an aggravation, for inasmuch as it is conceded that the man's heart itself is enmity against God, this is an admission of yet greater malice and blacker rebellion.

Then the defendant pleads in the next place that albeit he acknowledges the facts alleged against him, yet *he is no worse than other offenders,* and that there are many in the world who have sinned more grievously than he has done. But the great Daysman at once turns to the Statute Book, and says that as he is about to give his decision by law that plea is not at all tenable, for the law book has it—"Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." The offense of one sinner doth not excuse the offense of another; and the arbitrator declares that he cannot mix up other cases with the case now in hand; that the present offender has on his own confession broken the law, and that as the law book stands that is the only question to be decided for "the soul that sinneth it shall die," and if the defendant has no better plea to offer, judgment must go against him.

The sinner urges further, that though he has offended, and offended very greatly and grievously, yet *he has done a great many good things.* But the Daysman, looking the sinner full in the face, tells him that this plea also is bad, for the alleged commission of some acts of loyalty will not make compensation for avowed acts of treason. "Those things," saith he, "ye ought to have done, but not to have left the

others undone;" and he tells the sinner, with all kindness and gentleness, that straining at a gnat does not exonerate him for having swallowed a camel; and that having tithed mint, and anise, and cummin, is no justification for having devoured a widow's house. To have forgotten God is in itself a great enormity; to have lived without serving him is a crime of omission.

The defendant has no end of pleas, for the sinner has a thousand excuses; and finding that nothing else will do, he begins to appeal to the mercy of the plaintiff, and says *that for the future he will do better.* But the Daysman rules, still with kindness and gentleness, that the greatest imaginable virtue in the future will be no recompense for the sin of the past; for he finds in the lawbook no promise whatever made to that effect: but the statute runs in these words, "He will by no means spare the guilty;" "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

What is the poor defendant to do now? He is fairly beaten this time. He falls down on his knees, and with many tears and lamentations he cries, "I see how the case stands: *I have nothing to plead, but I appeal to the mercy of the plaintiff;* I confess that I have broken his commandments; I acknowledge that I deserve his wrath; but I have heard that he is merciful, and I plead for free and full forgiveness."

And now comes another scene. The plaintiff seeing the sinner on his knees, with his eyes full of tears, makes this reply, "I am willing at all times to deal kindly and according to lovingkindness with all my creatures; but will the arbitrator for a moment suggest that I should damage and ruin my own perfections of truth and holiness; that I should belie my own word; that I should imperil my own throne; that I should make the purity of immaculate justice to be suspected, and should bring down the glory of my unsullied holiness, because this creature has offended me, and now craves for mercy? I cannot, I will not spare the guilty; *he has offended, and he must die!* 'As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but would rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.' Still, I swore with an oath, 'The soul that sinneth shall die.' Would it not be a worse calamity that I should be unjust than that earth should lose its inhabitants? Better all men perish, than that the universe should lose the justice of God as its stay and shield." The arbitrator bows and says, "Even so; justice demands that the offender should die, and I would not have thee unjust."

What more does the arbitrator say? He sits still, and the case is in suspense. There stands the just and holy God, willing to forgive if it can be done without injury to the immutable principles of right. There sits the arbitrator, looking with eyes of love upon the poor, weeping, trembling sinner, and anxious to devise a plan to save him, but conscious that that plan must not infringe upon divine justice. The arbitrator, therefore, after pausing awhile, puts it thus: "I am anxious that these two should be brought together; I love them both: I will decide the case, and it shall be thus: *I* will pay my Father's justice all it craves; I pledge myself that in the fulness of time *I will suffer in my own proper person all that the weeping, trembling sinner ought to have suffered.* My Father, wilt thou stand to this?" The eternal God accepts the awful sacrifice! What say you, sinner, what say you?

Here, then, is the arbitration. Christ himself suffers: and now I have to put the query, "Hast thou accepted Christ?"

III. Let us now look at THE DAYSMAN'S SUCCESS.

For every soul who has received Christ, Christ has made a full atonement which God the Father has accepted; and his success in this matter is to be rejoiced in, first of all, because *the suit has been settled conclusively.*

Again, the case has been settled *on the best principles,* because, you see, neither

party can possibly quarrel with the decision. The sinner cannot, for it is all mercy to him: even eternal justice cannot, for it has had its due.

Again, the case has been so settled, *that both parties are well content.* You never hear a saved soul murmur at the substitution of the Lord Jesus. And Jehovah, on the other side, is perfectly content. He has received his dear Son to the throne of glory, and made him to sit at his right hand, because he is perfectly content with the great work which he has accomplished.

But, what is more and more wonderful still, *both parties have gained in the suit.* What has God gained? Why, glory to himself, and such glory as all creation could not give him, such glory as the ruin of sinners, though so well-deserved, could not give him. We were God's subjects once, but this arbitration has made us his sons. We were at our very best only the possessors of a paradise on earth, but now we are joint-heirs with Christ of a paradise above the skies. Both sides have won, and both sides must therefore be blessedly content with their glorious Daysman.

And, to conclude, through this Daysman *both parties have come to be united in the strongest, closest, dearest, and fondest bond of union.* This law-suit has ended in such a way that the plaintiff and the defendant are friends for life, nay, friends through death, and friends in eternity. What a wonderful thing is that union between God and the sinner! We have all been thinking a great deal lately about the Atlantic Cable. It is a very interesting attempt to join two worlds together. But oh! what an infinitely greater wonder *has been* accomplished. Christ Jesus saw the two worlds divided, and the great Atlantic of human guilt rolled between. He sank down deep into the woes of man till all God's waves and billows had gone over him, that he might be, as it were, the great telegraphic communication between God and the apostate race, between the Most Holy One and poor sinners. You may work that telegraph to-day, and you may easily understand the art of working it too. A sigh will work it; a tear will work it. Say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and along the wire the message will flash, and will reach God before it comes from you. It is swifter far than earthly telegraphs; ay, and there will come an answer back much sooner than you ever dream of, for it is promised—"Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

I would to God that some might now be led to look to the Savior, that some would come with weeping and with tears to him and say, "Take my case, and arbitrate for me; I accept thine atonement; I trust in thy precious blood; only receive me and I will rejoice in thee for ever with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

THE LORD—THE LIBERATOR.

C. H. SPURGEON.

The Lord looseth the prisoners.—Psalms cxlvi:7.

When preaching last Tuesday in Dover, the mayor of the town very courteously lent the ancient town-hall for the service, and in passing along to reach a private entrance, I noticed a large number of grated windows upon a lower level than the great hall. These belonged to the prison cells where persons committed for offenses within the jurisdiction of the borough were confined. It at once struck me as a singular combination, that we should be preaching the gospel of liberty in the upper chamber, while there were prisoners of the law beneath us. Perhaps when we sang praises to God, the prisoners, like those who were in the same jail with Paul and Silas, heard us; but the free word above did not give them liberty, nor did the voice of song loose their bonds. Alas! what a picture is this of many in our congregations. We preach liberty to the captives; we proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; but how many remain year after year in the bondage of Satan, slaves to sin. Praises cannot give them joy, for alas; their hearts are unused to gratitude. Some of them are mourning on account of unpardoned sin, and others of them are deploring their blighted hopes, for they have looked for comfort where it is never to be found. Let us breathe a prayer at the commencement of the sermon this morning, "Lord, break the fetters, and set free the captives. Glorify thyself this morning by proving thyself to be Jehovah, who looseth the prisoners."

The little circumstance which I have mentioned, fixed itself in my mind. In my day-dream I thought that some angelic warder was leading me along the corridors of this great world-prison, and bidding me look into the various cells where the prisoners were confined, reminding me ever and anon as I looked sorrowful, that "Jehovah looseth the prisoners."

I. The first cell to which I went, and to which I shall conduct you, is called *the common prison.* In this common prison, innumerable souls are shut up. This is the ward of SIN. All the human race have been prisoners here; and those who this day are perfectly at liberty, once wore the heavy chain, and were immured within the black walls of this enormous prison. I stepped into it, and instead of hearing notes of mourning and lament, I heard loud and repeated bursts of laughter. The profane were cursing and blaspheming; others were shouting as though they had found great spoil. I looked into the faces of some of the criminals, and saw sparkling gaiety: their aspect was rather that of wedding-guests than prisoners. Walking to and fro, I noticed captives who boasted that they were free, and when I spoke to them of their prison-house, and urged them to escape, they resented my advice, saying, "We were born free, and were never in bondage unto any man." They bade me prove my words; and when I pointed to the irons on their wrists, they laughed at me, and said that these were ornaments which gave forth music as they moved. There were men fettered hard and fast to foul and evil vices, and these called themselves free-livers, while others whose very thoughts were bound, for the iron had entered into their soul, cried out to me, that they were free-thinkers. I marked as I walked this prison, that the most fettered thought themselves the most free, and those who were in the

darkest part of the dungeon, thought they had most light, and those whom I considered to be the most wretched, and the most to be pitied, were the very ones who laughed the most, and raved most madly and boisterously in their mirth. I looked with sorrow but as I looked, I saw a bright spirit touch a prisoner on the shoulder, who thereon withdrew with the shining one. He went out, and I knew, for I had read the text—"The Lord looseth the prisoners," I knew that the prisoner had been loosed from the house of bondage. But I noted that as he went forth his late bond-fellows laughed and pointed with the finger, and called him sniveler and hypocrite. I watched, and saw the mysterious visitant touch another, and then another, and another, and they disappeared. The common conversation of the prison said that they had gone mad; that they were become slaves, or miserable fanatics, whereas I knew that they were gone to be free for ever. The prisoners who were touched with the finger of delivering love were frequently the worst of the whole crew. I saw some of those men who had once been prisoners come back again into the prison—arrayed in white robes, looking like new creatures. They began to talk with their fellow-prisoners; they told them there was liberty to be had, urging them to escape, pleading as though it were their own life that was at stake. At first I hoped within myself that all the company of prisoners would rise and cry, "Let us be free." But no; the more these men pleaded the harder the others seemed to grow, and, indeed, I found it so when I sought myself to be an ambassador to these slaves of sin.

"Oh! sovereign grace, their hearts subdue;
May they be freed from bondage too;
As willing followers of the Lord,
Brought forth to freedom by his word."

II. I asked the guide where those were led who were released from the common ward. He told me that they were taken away to be free, but that before their complete gaol deliverance it was necessary that they should visit a house of detention which he would show me. It was called *the solitary cell.* I had heard much of the solitary system, and I wished to look inside this cell, supposing that it would be a dreadful place. Over the door was written this word—"PENITENCE," and when I opened it I found it so clean and white, and full of light. Here David wrote seven of his sweetest Psalms; Peter also wept bitterly here; and the woman who was a sinner here washed the feet of her Lord. I found that every prisoner in this cell must be there alone. The prisoner groaned that he should never come out of this confinement, because sin had ruined him utterly, and destroyed his soul eternally. But I saw that the door had a knocker inside, and that there was a shining one standing ready outside to open the door at once; yea, more, I perceived that there was a secret spring called *faith,* and if the man touched it with a trembling finger, it would make the door fly open.

III. I passed away from that cell, and I halted at another; this, also, had an iron gate of unbelief, as heavy and as ponderous as the former. The wretch confined here was one who said he *could not pray.* If he could pray he would be free. But there was a little table in this cell, and on the table lay a key of promise, inscribed with choice words, and if the prisoner had possessed skill to use it, he might have made his escape at once. This was the key, and these were the words thereon—"The Lord looked down from the height of his sanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death."

I passed on and came to another chamber. This room was large, and had many persons in it who were trying to walk to and fro, but every man had a chain round his

ankle, and a huge cannon-ball fixed to it—a military punishment they said for deserters from the ranks of virtue. This *clog of habit* troubled the prisoner much. I saw some of them trying to file their chains with rusty nails, and others were endeavoring to fret away the iron by dropping tears of penitence thereon; but these poor men made but little progress at their work. The warder told me that this was the chain of *Habit,* and that the ball which dragged behind was the old propensity to lust and sin. There is no way of getting rid of the links of old habits but by leaving the prison of unbelief and coming to Christ, then the evil habits are renounced as a necessary consequence though the temptation will remain. Though sometimes we have to feel a link of the chain, it is a subject of unbounded thankfulness that the link is not fastened to the staple. We may sometimes feel it dragging behind, enough to trip us up, so that we cannot run in the path of obedience as swiftly as we would, but it is not in the staple now.

VI. I must take you to another cell. In the prison I went to see in my reverie there was a *hard-labor room.* Those who entered it were mostly very proud people; they held their heads very high, and would not bend; they were birds with fine feathers, and thought themselves quite unfit to be confined, but being in durance vile, they resolved to work their own way out. They believed in the system of human merit, and hoped in due time to purchase their liberty. They had saved up a few old counterfeit farthings, with which they thought they could by-and-bye set themselves free. At last they could do no more, and fell down under their burdens utterly broken in spirit; then I saw that every prisoner who at last so fainted as to give up all hope of his own deliverance by merit, was taken up by a shining spirit, and carried out of the prison and made free for ever. Then I thought within myself, "Surely, surely, these are proud self-righteous persons who will not submit to be saved by grace, 'therefore he brought down their heart with labor; they fell down and there was none to help; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.'"

VII. As I passed along, there was another cell, called *The Low Dungeon of Despondency.* I had read of this in the book of Jeremiah—"He hath led me and brought me into darkness and not into light." It is a deep, dark, doleful place; I saw a poor soul in very deep distress. He said he had been a great offender, and he knew it; he had been convinced of sin; he had heard the gospel preached, and sometimes he thought it was for him, but at other times he felt sure it was not; there were seasons when his spirit could lay hold of Christ, but there were times when he dared not hope. There were two villains called Mistrust and Timorous, who were bent upon keeping him here, even though they knew that he was an heir of heaven, and had a right to liberty. It was a comfort to recollect that no soul ever utterly perished while it called upon the name of the Lord.

VIII. I must take you to another dungeon called *the inner prison.* It is *the hold of despair.* When a spirit once gets into that inner prison, comforts are turned at once into miseries, and the very promises of God appear to be in league for the destruction of the soul. John Bunyan describes old Giant Despair and his crab-tree cudgel better than I can do it. Are any of you in that dungeon to-day? Do you say, "I have grieved the Spirit, and he is gone; my day of grace is over; I have sinned against light and knowledge; I am lost?" Come, look over this bunch of keys: "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Brother, this inner dungeon can be opened by the Lord Jesus.

IX. I am getting to the end of this dark story, now; but tarry a moment at

the grating of *the Devil's Torture Chamber.* Read John Bunyan's "Grace abounding," if you would understand what I mean. The devil tempted him, he says, to doubt the existence of God; the truth of Scripture; the manhood of Christ; then his deity; and once, he says, he tempted him to say things which he will never write, lest he should pollute others. Use your sword, poor prisoner! You have one. *"It is written"*—"the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." Give your foe a deadly stab; tell him that "God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and you may yet see him spread his dragon wings and fly away. This, too, is a prison in which unbelief has confined both saint and sinner, and the Lord himself must loose these prisoners.

X. Last of all, there is *the condemned cell.* I was in it once. Oh! that condemned cell! Next to Tophet, there can be no state more wretched than that of a man who is brought here! And yet let me remind you that when a man is thoroughly condemned in his own conscience he shall never be condemned. When he is once brought to see condemnation written on everything that he has done, though hell may flame in his face, he shall be led out, not to execution; led out, but not to perish, "he shall be led forth with joy, and he shall go forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before him into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." When men feel the rope about their necks, acknowledge that God's sentence is just, and confess that if they perish they cannot complain, it is then that sovereign mercy steps in and cries, "I have blotted out like a cloud thine iniquities, and like a thick cloud thy sins; thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee."

And now, thou glorious Jehovah, the Liberator, unto thee be praises! All thy redeemed bless three, and those who are to-day in their dungeons cry unto thee! Stretch out thy arm, thou mighty Deliverer! Thou who didst send thy Son Jesus to redeem by blood, send now thy Spirit to set free by power, and this day, even this day, let multitudes rejoice in the liberty wherewith thou makest free; and unto Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Israel's one Redeemer, be glory for ever and ever! Amen.

SIN LAID ON JESUS.

C. H. SPURGEON.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—Isaiah liii: 6.

The verse opens with a confession of sin *common* to all the persons intended in the verse. "We have turned every one to his own way" is a confession importing that each man had sinned against light peculiar to himself, or sinned with an aggravation which he at least could not perceive in his fellow. This confession being thus general and particular has many other traits of excellence about it of which we cannot just now speak. It is very *unreserved.* You will observe that there is not a single syllable by way of excuse; there is not a word to detract from the force of the confession. It is moreover singularly *thoughtful,* for thoughtless persons do not use a metaphor so appropriate as the text: "All we like sheep have gone astray," like a creature wise enough to find the gap in the hedge by which to escape, but so silly as to have no propensity or desire to return to the place from which it had perversely wandered. I like the confession of the text because it is a giving up of all pleas of self-righteousness. It is the declaration of a body of men who are guilty, consciously guilty; guilty with aggravations, guilty without excuse; and here they all stand with their weapons of rebellion broken in pieces, saying unanimously, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."

I hear no dolorous wailings attending this confession of sin; for the next sentence makes it almost a song. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It is the most grievous sentence of the three; but it is the most charming and the most full of comfort. Strange is it that where misery was concentrated mercy reigned, and where sorrow reached her climax there is it that a weary soul finds sweetest rest. The Savior bruised is the healing of bruised hearts.

I want now to draw the hearts of all who feel the confession to the blessed doctrine set forth in the text: the Lord hath laid on Christ the iniquity of us all.

We shall take the text first by way of *exposition;* then by way of *application;* and we shall conclude with serious, and I hope profitable, *contemplation.*

I. First, let us consider the text by way of *exposition.*

1. It may be well to give the marginal translation of the text, "Jehovah hath made to meet on him the iniquity of us all." The first thought that demands notice is *the meeting of sin.* Sin I may compare to the rays of some evil sun. God as it were holds up a burning glass, and concentrates all the scattered rays in a focus upon Christ. That seems to be the thought of the text, "The Lord hath focused upon him the iniquity of us all." Or take the text in our own version, "The Lord hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all;" put upon him, as a burden is laid upon a man's back, all the burdens of all his people; put upon his head, as the high priest of old laid upon the scape-goat all the sin of the beloved ones, that he might bear them in his own person. The two translations you see are perfectly consistent; all sins are made to meet, and then having met together and been tied up in one crushing load the whole burden is laid upon him.

2. The second thought is that *sin was made to meet upon the suffering person of the innocent substitute.* I have said "the suffering person" because the connection of the text requires it. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." It is in connection with this, and as an explanation of all his grief, that it is added, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The Lord Jesus Christ would have been incapable of receiving the sin of all his people as their substitute had he been himself a sinner: but he was, as to his own divine nature, worthy to be hymned as "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;" and, as to his human nature, he was by miraculous conception free from all original sin, and in the holiness of his life he was such that he was the spotless Lamb of God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and therefore he was on all accounts capable of standing in the room, place, and stead of sinful men.

3. It has been asked, *Was it just that sin should thus be laid upon Christ?* Our reply is fourfold. We believe it was rightly so, first because *it was the act of him who must do right,* for "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Remember, moreever, that *Jesus Christ voluntarily took this sin upon himself.* It was not forced upon him.

But I would have you remember, beloved, that *there was a relationship between our Lord and his people,* which is too often forgotten, but which rendered it natural that he should bear the sin of his people. Why does the text speak of our sinning like sheep? I think it is because it would call to our recollection that *Christ is our Shepherd.* Yet there is a fourth consideration that may remove the difficulty of sin being laid upon Christ. It is not only that God laid it there, that Jesus voluntarily took it, and moreover was in such a union with his church that it was natural that he should take it, but you must remember that *this plan of salvation is precisely similar to the method of our ruin.* If we grant the fall,—and we must grant the fact, however we may dislike the principle,—we cannot think it unjust that God should give us a plan of salvation based upon the same principle of federal headship. At any rate we, accepting the principle of the federal headship in the fall, joyfully receive it as to the restoration of Christ Jesus. It seems right, then, on these four grounds, that the Lord should make the sins of all his people to meet upon Christ.

4. I beg you to observe in the fourth place, *that laying upon Christ brought upon him all the consequences connected with it.* God cannot look where there is sin with any pleasure, and though as far as Jesus is personally concerned, he is the Father's beloved Son in whom he is well pleased; yet when he saw sin laid upon his Son, he made that Son cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" To crown all there came death itself; death is the punishment for sin. "He became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross."

II. Let us come briefly to the application.

Dear reader, a friend now puts a question to you. There is a countless company whose sins the Lord Jesus bore; *did he bear yours?* Do you wish to have an answer? Are you unable to give one? Let me read this verse to you and see if you can join in it. I do not mean join in it saying, "That is true," but feeling that it is true in your own soul. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." If there be in you this morning a penitential confession which leads you to acknowledge that you have erred and strayed like a lost sheep, if there be in you a personal sense of sin which makes you feel that you have turned to your own way, and if now you can trust in Jesus, then the Lord hath laid on him your iniquity.

III. Now consecrate a few minutes to hallowed contemplation.

You do not want talk, you want thought: I will give you four things to think

of. The first is *the astounding mass of sin that must have been laid on Christ.* All the sins against light and knowledge, sins against law and gospel, week-day sins, Sabbath sins, hand sins, lip sins, heart sins, sins against the Father, sins against the Son, sins against the Holy Ghost, sins of all shapes, all laid upon him; can you get the thought now?

2. The next subject I offer you for contemplation is this, *the amazing love of Jesus which brought him to all this.* Remember Paul's way of putting it. "Scarcely for a righteous (or strictly just) man will one die; peradventure for a good (or benevolent) man one might even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly." When Christ has renewed us by his Spirit, there may be a temptation to imagine that some excellency in us won the Savior's heart; but, my brethren, you must understand that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners.

3. Wonder of wonders that I need another minute to set you thinking on another subject, *the matchless security which this plan of salvation offers.* I do not see in what point that man is vulnerable who can feel and know that Christ has borne his sin. How grandly does the apostle put it! It seems to me as if he never was worked up by the Holy Spirit to such a pitch of eloquence as when speaking about the death and resurrection of the Savior, he propounds that splendid question, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" There, where eternal justice sits upon a flaming throne, the apostle gazes with eye undimmed into the ineffable splendor, and though some one seems to say, "The Judge will condemn," he replies, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

4. Lastly, I desire to give you as a subject for contemplation, and I pray you do not forget it, this question, *What then are the claims of Jesus Christ upon you and upon me?* Napoleon singularly enough had power to get the hearts of men twisted and twined about him; when he was in his wars there were many of his captains and even of his private soldiers who not only marched with the quick obedience of a soldier wherever they were bidden, but who left an enthusiasm for him. Have you never heard of him who threw himself in the way of the shot to receive it in his bosom to save the Emperor? No obedience, no law could have required that of him, but enthusiastic love moved him to it; and it is such enthusiasm that my Master deserves in the very highest degree from us. What shall I do for my Master? What shall I do for my Lord? How shall I set him forth? My brethren and sisters, my highest aim before God, next to the conversion of the unconverted among you, is this, that you who do love Christ may really love him and act as if you did. Contribute of your substance to the common work of the church, and do that constantly, and as a matter of delight. Do something for yourself, speak for Christ yourself, have some work in hand on your own account. O Christian, by the blood of Jesus devote yourself to him again! In the old Roman battles it sometimes happened that the strife seemed dubious, and a captain inspired by superstitious patriotism would stand upon his sword and devote himself to destruction for the good of his country, and then, according to those old legends, the battle always turned. Now, men and brethren, sisters, every one of you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, devote yourselves this day to live, to die, to spend, and to be spent for King Jesus.

ONLY TRUST HIM! ONLY TRUST HIM!

C. H. SPURGEON.

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.—Luke xvii: 12-14.

These ten lepers were required by the Savior to perform an act of faith in him before they had the slightest evidence in themselves that he had wrought a good work upon them. They were to exhibit faith in Christ Jesus's power to heal them by going to exhibit themselves as healed, though as yet they were in the same condition as before. This is the point I wish to dwell upon—that the Lord Jesus Christ bids sinners believe in him, and trust their souls to him, though they may not yet discern in themselves any work of his grace. Just as these men were lepers, and nothing but lepers, so you may be sinners, and nothing but sinners, and yet you are bidden to exhibit faith in Jesus Christ while you are just what you are. As these men were to start straight away to the priests with all their leprosy white upon them, and to go there as if they felt they were already healed, so are you, with all your sinnership upon you, and your sense of condemnation heavy on your soul, to believe in Jesus Christ just as you are, and you shall find everlasting life upon the spot. This is my point, and it is of the first importance.

Now, first, I shall notice *what signs are commonly looked for by unconverted men as reasons for believing in Christ;* which, indeed, are no reasons at all: then, secondly, I shall try to show *what is the real ground and reason for faith in Christ;* and, thirdly, *what will be the issue of a faith in Christ similar to that of the lepers.*

I. First, then, I say that we are to believe in Jesus Christ—to trust him to heal us of the great disease of sin—though as yet we may have about us no sign or token that he has wrought any good work upon us. We are not to look for signs and evidences within ourselves before we venture our souls upon Jesus. The contrary supposition is a soul-destroying error, and I will try to expose it by showing what are the signs that are commonly looked for by men.

One of the most frequent is *a consciousness of great sin,* and a horrible dread of divine wrath, leading to despair.

You know that Jesus justifies the ungodly, and cleanses the wicked from their sin through his precious blood; and though you know this to be true, you say, "I cannot trust the Crucified, I cannot rely upon his full atonement unless I feel my guilt to be unpardonable, and disbelieve my God." I pray that you may never feel as you foolishly think you ought to feel; for feelings of despair dishonor the Lord and vex his Spirit, and certainly cannot be good for you. These ten lepers felt no change whatever wrought upon them when Jesus bade them go off to be examined by the priests; yet away they went, and as they went they were made whole. Trust Jesus Christ just as you are, without those feelings which you have hitherto supposed to be necessary as a sort of preparation. Trust him at once, and follow him, and he will make you whole before you have taken many steps in the path of faith and obedience.

Many other persons think that they must, before they can trust Christ, experience *quite a blaze of joy.* "Oh," says one, "I heard a Christian say that when he found the Savior he was so happy that he did not know how to contain himself, and he sang like a whole band of music in one—

'Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.'

Oh that I could be as full of joy as these 'happy day' people!" Must you needs have the joy before you exercise the faith? How unreasonable! Because we tell you that such and such a root produces a sweet fruit, will you say that you must have the fruit before you will accept the root? Surely that is bad reasoning. We who have experienced this joy came to Christ in order to obtain it, and did not wait until we found it, or else we should have waited until now. We came to Jesus just as we were: some of us were very wretched, but we came just as we then were, and we trusted Christ, and we were made whole. Then followed joy and peace; but if we had waited till we felt joy and peace before we came, we should have been standing out against the gospel plan, which is, that men are to trust the Savior before they feel the slightest benefit from him. O sinner, is not this common sense? Must we not take medicine before we are cured by it? must we not eat bread before it removes our hunger? Before the Lord Jesus has either comforted you or healed you consciously, you are to come and just do what he bids you, and trust in him to save you. Neither the gloom of horror nor the blaze of delight is to be looked for before faith, but faith is to precede all and that faith is a simple, humble reliance upon Christ.

There is another way in which some men try to put off believing in Christ, and that is, they *expect an actual conversion to be manifest in them before they will trust the Savior.* Now, understand that Christ has wrought salvation in no man who is unconverted. There must be a perfect turning round of us—a complete conversion from sin to holiness. But that *is* salvation, and not a preparation for salvation. Conversion is the manifestation of Christ's healing power. But you are not to have this before you trust him; you are to trust him for this very thing. When a man with a disease goes to an eminent physician, does he say, "Doctor, I will trust you with my case when I have reached a certain stage"? "Nay," says the physician, "if you have reached that state you will be in a fair way of healing, and you won't want me." Come to Jesus just as you are, with your hard, stony, senseless heart, and trust that and everything else to his saving power. The good Samaritan when he found the man beaten by the thieves came *where he was.* That is what Jesus does. He does not say, "Now, then, you wounded man, get up, and come to me, and I will pour the oil and wine into you." No; but he goes where the wounded one lies in utter helplessness, stoops over him, removes his rags, cleanses his wounds, pours in the oil and wine, and lifts him up, and bears him to the house of mercy. Poor soul! My Master is not a half Savior, but a whole one; and if you are lying at the gates of death, hard by the doors of hell, he is as able to save you as if you were sitting on the doorstep of heaven. Just where you are, and as you are, trust Christ to save you, and you shall be saved. Do not look for conversion first, but expect it as the result of faith.

We have known some who have had a very curious idea, which I can hardly put into words, namely, that if they were to be saved they would *experience some very singular sensation.* They could believe in Christ if they felt in a mysterious fashion. It is rather difficult to understand people, but when I have been talking to some inquirers I have thought that they expected even a physical sensation—a sensation within their bodies.

The very fact that you can and do believe has within it the essential force by which you will be delivered from the alienation of your mind. He that believes God

is no longer an enemy to him. Those whom we trust we soon learn to love. This, you see, demands no singular sensation or excitement; this is plain and clear enough. "But must we not be born again?" says one. Yes, truly; and he that believes in Christ is born again. Though as yet he knows it not, the first mark of life is within his soul, for the first sure token of spiritual life is trusting Jesus Christ alone. The best evidence is not trusting marks, signs, evidences, inward feelings, impressions, and so on; but just getting out of that and trusting Jesus. There lies the essence of the saving change, the getting from self to the Lord God in Christ Jesus.

II. And now, secondly, and as briefly as I can, I want to bring forward what the reason is for our believing in Jesus Christ. What warrant have I, as a sinner, for trusting myself with Jesus Christ?

No warrant whatever within ourselves need be looked for. The warrant for our believing Christ lies in this—first, there is *God's witness concerning his Son Jesus Christ.* God, the Everlasting Father, has set forth Christ "to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sin of the whole world." God the Father says to men, "I am able to forgive you justly through the death and righteousness of my Son. Trust me, and I will save you." What do you want more than that? He that believeth not hath made God a liar, because he hath not believed his witness concerning his Son.

The next warrant for our believing is *Jesus Christ himself.* He bears witness on earth as well as the Father, and his witness is true. Consider who this Christ is whom we are bidden to trust. Look at his person. He is God, "very God of very God." Can we doubt him? He is perfect man, and he has taken perfect manhood upon himself for our sakes. Can we doubt him? He has lived a perfect life. When did he ever lie? Who can charge him with falsehood?

Still, to put this in another shape, you want to know why you are to believe: your warrant for believing lies in the fact that *God commands you to believe.* Nobody can want any permission to keep the law: the command includes a permit. When the law of the gospel comes from God himself, dear hearer, what is there to do but to obey it and believe at once? The door is open, enter. The feast is spread, eat. The fountain is filled, wash.

Moreover, there is *the promise* made to you and to every creature, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth in him is not condemned." Do you hear that? "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life." He has eternal life, he has it now. These are promises rich and free for you. What more do you want? Oh, I know not what more I can say,—when Jesus commands you, when Jesus invites you, how can you stand back?

I will add only this one more thing: I dare say these poor lepers believed in Jesus because *they had heard of other lepers whom he had cleansed.* Now, here stands one before you, a representative of many more in this place, who, if this were a fit time, would stand up and say the same. I came to Jesus full of sin, guilty and lost, with a hard heart and a heavy spirit; and I looked to him, trusting him alone to save me; and he has saved me. He has changed my nature, he has blotted out my sin, and he has made me love him, and love all that is good and true and generous, for his sake. It is not I, even I, that am left alone to tell you; but, as I have said, there are thousands in this Tabernacle, at this very hour, upon whom the same miracle of divine mercy has been wrought. Therefore trust my Lord Jesus, and you shall feel the same miracle wrought upon you.

III. I must now close with the third point, which shall not occupy you many minutes; it is this, What is the issue of this kind of faith that I have been preaching? This doctrine of "only trust Jesus,"—what does it lead to? This trusting in Jesus without marks, signs, evidences, tokens, what is the result and outcome of it?

The first thing that I have to say about it is this,—that the very existence of such a faith as that in the soul is *evidence that there is already a saving change.* "Oh" say you, "I do not see that. How can it prove that I am a new man because I trust myself with Christ?" They said to Jesus in olden times, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" and he answered, "This is the work of God—the most godlike work that ye can do—that ye believe on Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." It is even so: in one sense faith is not a work at all, and in another sense it is the grandest of all works.

Now, mark you, before long, sooner or later, *you will become delightfully conscious of the fact that you are saved.* Many a man is saved, and for a time he questions the truth of the gracious work, but in due time the blessing is made clear to him. When a man trusts Jesus as these ten lepers did, and acts upon his trust, good always comes of it. See the ten men! They are going towards the priest, though they have not yet felt that they are healed. They are acting upon Christ's authority, and he will not make fools of them, for they that trust in him shall not be ashamed nor confounded. They must start on their walk before they feel the healing; but as they are going they shall feel it. And you, too, trusting Christ without any sense of any good thing, shall not be long before you shall feel his blessed power upon your heart.

To put all in one, if you are ready to come to Christ, and trust him without any miracles, signs, or evidences, but will simply trust *him* alone, you have within you a power which will carry you through life, and preserve you in holiness even to the end. It is a grand start in life for you, a poor sinner, to begin by trusting Christ alone, saying, "I, without anything good in me whatever, without anything that I can lay hold of as a hope for me, do cast myself, whether I sink or swim, upon Christ Jesus the Savior of sinners, and 'if I perish, I perish.'" You will be brought, in business, in the family, and in the various trials of life, into such a condition that you will have to exercise a faith just of the same sort as that which you begin with; I would, therefore, have you learn the lesson while you are young. You will have to say, "Though I am weakness itself, and poverty itself, and do not see how I may be provided for, yet as the ravens and the sparrows are fed, so shall I be; and therefore I cast my nakedness upon God for clothing, and my hunger upon God for food, and my very life I cast upon him that he may preserve it to me between the jaws of death." This is grand faith, and you must begin there, for if you do not you have not begun to build on the rock. Your first course must be the live rock, or else all will be insecure. To begin well is half the battle: mind that you get a foundation which can never be moved; for life has many trials, and woe to the man whose foundation fails him.

This is grand faith to die with as well as to live with. Now the curtains are drawn and the light of the sun is shut out, and the voices of friends begin to fail, and the ear is dull, and the eye-strings break. My soul, thou art now about to launch into the unseen world. What wilt thou do now? What, indeed, but faint into the arms of thy Father and thy God! Oh, my dear hearer, if you have learned to trust at the very first because of what Jesus is, and not because of what you are, then you will know how to die; for there, in prospect of the Lord's coming, fears will come, and doubts will come, and terrors will come, if you are looking within, or looking back upon your past life and trying to find a reliance there. But if you can say, "My Savior, into thy hands I commit my spirit: my naked soul I put into thy pierced hands again," then may you breathe your last in peace, knowing whom you have believed, and being persuaded that he is able to keep that which you have committed to him until that day. When John Hyatt lay a-dying, one of his friends said, "Mr. Hyatt, can you trust your soul with Jesus now?" "Man," said he, "trust him with one soul? That is nothing. I could trust him with a million souls if I had them. I know that

he is able to save all who trust him." I want you to begin, then, as these poor lepers did, by just taking Christ at his word, and going your way in the strength of that word before you feel any hopeful change within. Hope that is seen is not hope; but glorious is the faith which seeth him who is invisible, and grasps the substance of the things not seen as yet. By this power I even now anticipate the joys of the upper skies. Try, beloved, to do the same. O for more faith! It will be grand to know all heaven, though you have not seen it and felt it, because you knew and trusted the Lord of heaven. Hitherto you have found the promise true; now trust the Lord for glory as once you trusted him for grace, and you shall find ere long that his richest promises are sure.

God save you, every one of you, beloved; and may he do so at this very hour, for his dear Son's sake. Amen.

[FRIENDS frequently write me, requesting information as to which of my sermons they could distribute with the greatest hope of doing good thereby. To answer that question I have made this selection of twelve from the sixteen hundred and sixty of my printed discoures; and they are bound together here just as they were issued in the first instance, without regard to consecutive paging. These discourses have been already sealed with the highest approval, for they have been used by the Holy Spirit to lead many to Jesus. The thought of making this selection came to me in my illness, and I have comforted myself with the idea that these soul-saving sermons may thus enter upon a new career of usefulness. I trust it may be so, and that they will go forth still further afield to gather home the lost sheep.—C. H. SPURGEON.]

FAITH.

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.—John vi: 29.

Christ's philosophy concerning faith. "This is the work of God, that ye believe." Faith then is a work; an act, not a sentiment, not something that comes to a man apart from himself, without reference to himself. I can believe or I can refuse to believe. Faith is a work.

I. First of all, notice the pre-supposition of the text. There is nothing more interesting in the study of the New Testament than the fact that Jesus perpetually set up this claim among men that he was sent from God. I do not want to enter into this in any controversial spirit to-night, nor do I propose doing it to any length, but I want to say this one thing: Unless you recognize that Jesus was far more than one among other teachers, unless you see him to be something more than a child of his own age but with light beyond it, then you must give up the picture that the New Testament gives you of Christ as false, for it is impossible for you to study the New Testament without seeing how Jesus perpetually claimed to be sent from God.

And we must not forget that this age is asking a sign just as surely as that first age asked a sign. Everywhere men are saying to-day exactly this same thing. When we press upon them the claims of Christ and urge them to surrender to him, the question comes, "What sign does he show? How do you demonstrate the fact

that he is The Sent of God?" Now, let me say this. There is no sign that Jesus Christ was The Sent of God that is sufficient to prove it except himself. He said to men, "Believe me, or else believe me for the works' sake. If you cannot accept the supreme evidence, then be helped toward it by the miracle." But the supreme and overwhelming proof that Jesus was The Sent of God is what he was and is, what he taught and teaches, what he did and does.

What, then, was the value of Christ's mission. Granting for the sake of argument, that he was sent of God, for what was he The Sent of God? He came for two things. He came for revelation; he came for reconciliation. Or, if I may use two other words: He came for light and he came for life. He came, first of all, to give men light or revelation; he came to bring men life and so to bring about reconciliation. He came to give men revelation concerning what? Concerning God, concerning man, concerning the inter-relation between God and man. He came to bring about reconciliation. What reconciliation? First of all, moral conviction in the life of man; secondly, moral cleansing in the life of a man; and, thirdly, mutual communion between that man and God.

Now, Jesus is to be tested to-day by these self-same things. And we claim him to be The Sent of God at this hour because he brings to us revelation, and works reconciliation.

II. And now the Master said, and says, "This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent." It is at this point perhaps that your difficulty arises. You say, "But I cannot compel my belief. Surely I am not to be counted a sinner because I do not believe this, and a saint because I do believe that. Belief is not something that a man can compel." There is no need for me to argue that point at length, for men everywhere are coming to understand that there is a very close connection between the will and belief. Those of you here that are familiar with Professor James' chapter on "The will to believe," understand all that I would like to say to you on this matter. When a man, if he is truly sincere, comes to me and says, "I cannot believe," I wait for him patiently, feeling that perhaps he is taking in and attempting to understand a larger sum of things than I am capable of taking in and understanding. But I say to him: "Do not rest. Do not imagine that doubt is a finality. Quote the line, if you will, in defense of your doubt; say, 'I will not make my judgment blind'; I will take in the sum of things; I will consider the questions that come; but quote your line once more in defense of faith and say, 'I will not make my judgment blind'; I will not be satisfied with negation; I will press through and attempt to discover truth."

III. And so I come to the final word, the great proclamation of the text: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And notice that this is all-inclusive. It is, first of all, the initial work of God; it is the point at which Christian life begins. It is, moreover, inclusive. There is no department of the life that is outside of this ideal and this claim. This is the work of God.

How shall I put this superlatively? The first thing that you have to do is to crown Jesus, and in the moment when you crown him, you are doing what God does, and you and God are joined. This is the work of God, that you believe on him.

But it is more than initial; it is inspirational, if I may use the word. The work of believing on him is not an act; it is an attitude. It affects all the thinking, all the speaking, all the doing. To believe on him always is always to do the work of God. I am to prosecute my studies by believing on him. I am to conduct my business by believing on him. May God deliver every man here from the awful heresy that conscience is not to operate in business! I must not touch one single thing in my professional or business life, in my recreation, in my home, save as I remit it to him. That is believing on him; not merely the intellectual assent to the fact that he is

King, but submission to his kingship. I believe on him day by day, as I am the bond slave of Jesus Christ. And it is inclusive,—it takes in all the territory of my being, all the forces of my life, the utmost reach of the ages. To crown him here and now and always and forever, that is the supreme work of God.

Have you believed on him? If not, why not? Is your difficulty intellectual? I beseech you, do not make your judgment blind," do not tarry saying, "When all the mystery of Christ is explained, I will believe"; for if you so tarry you will never believe. Rather say: "The light has come to me, new light has flashed upon me; the call of Christ has been clear in my soul." Answer it, man; follow the gleam. It is but a gleam as yet; it has not broadened into day; it is not noontide for you yet, but the gleam is upon your life; follow it; crown him. That is the first thing.

Another says: "My difficulty is moral. There is an evil thing in my life mastering me." I take you back to the first word,—"Repent," change your mind. Instead of gazing at that sin at the center of your life, put God at the center and say: "Here am I; so help me, God; and God and I are mightier than any sin that ever yet has mastered me." "Repent," "believe,"—these are the two great words that mark the beginning of the Christian life. No man can turn from godlessness toward Jesus Christ without becoming conscious of the light. Obey the light, and as you do it you work the work of God.—Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, D.D., London, England.

VISION BEFORE WORK.

JOHN ROBERTSON, D.D.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and the two other of his disciples, etc.—John xxi: 1-14.

A fine list, but there is one who should have been there missing. He has not arrived. Read the list again. But these were not all that were to be at this tryst. There was another one to have turned up at this time, and that other one who is missing is Jesus. I tell you there is a big gap in that list. Jesus is missing and he was to be in the company when they gathered thus, and how is it? For you must carefully balance John's order of naming the names of those that have arrived. How is it that Simon Peter is full of confusion? I think Simon Peter is blushing in his old blundering way, and I will tell you what he has been doing. He has been robbing the mail. How is that?

You have in your country what you call special delivery letters. A special delivery letter is attended to first, I think. I received one in the city of Columbus before I was up one morning. The bell boy at the hotel knocked at my door and said there was a letter for me. I said, "The letters can wait until I come down."

But he said, "This is a special delivery letter. We deliver special delivery messages always when they arrive."

"Well," I said, "I will take it. It is something important if it is a special delivery letter."

There was a special delivery message sent to Simon Peter about this very morning, when women went to the sepulchre and found nobody there but the shining one who

said, "Whom seek ye?" and they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." The angel said, "He is not here. He is risen. Come see the place where the Lord lay." And after they had seen it and were greatly astonished, the angel sent a "special delivery message."

"Go tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee, and there shall ye see him." The tense of the verbs is equal to the imperative. "There ye shall certainly see him."

The message to Simon Peter as the leader of the disciples was, "Go down to Galilee, and there shall ye see him." It is a wonder that Simon Peter did not have them all out of Jerusalem by the first sun-down.

But Simon Peter and the rest of them are at least eight days late. What is the reason of the tarrying? I can only say this. Peter has just been feeling thus: If they all go down to Galilee to look for Jesus to-day, there will be a gap in the ranks. Thomas, called Didymus will be out. Thomas has been making a great fuss about the superior need he has of proof that the Lord is risen from the dead. He has fallen back. What should Simon Peter have done? I think he should have left Thomas alone for somebody else to deal with. The thing for you and me is loyalty to Jesus, attention to his messages, and let him deal with those who are slow-footed and objective.

And the days have passed and a week has gone, and Simon Peter, who got that special delivery message, instead of going right away with all that would follow and leave the rest that were not ready, has been pilfering the message and consulting his reason and judgment, and what a mess he has made of it! Here they are, but there is no Jesus. Simon Peter feels strange. I know that Jesus is never late at the trysting place. I know he is not absent without a reason, and Simon Peter to end the difficulty says "I go a-fishing."

Is fishing wrong? Yes, sir, when it takes the place of seeing. It was not fishing that Simon Peter was sent down to do, it was to see. Simon, the Lord asked you to lead the disciples seeing, not fishing. They all say, "We go with you." And, what a crowd! How they lash that sea, how they seize their nets! What turmoil! Great workers and fishermen, but poor fishing! I tell you what it is, fishing when it takes the place of seeing is sin. Seeing must precede fishing. What a poor night's catch they had when they went fishing instead of seeing!

Have you ever done that? I confess that I have several times gone fishing instead of seeing and thus have robbed the Lord. He does not want our service as much as our greatest love. Another can do your work, but another cannot give your love, and the Lord wants not your work but your love.

What would I think if my little girlie when I went home would never look up at all, would not hop, skip and jump, and fling her arms around my neck and say, "Papa, I'm glad you've come back!" If she should sit still because she was very busy embroidering a pair of nice slippers for me, if the needle was flashing through the embroidery, and I came in and she never looked up at me because she was awfully busy, I would say:

"My dear child, I don't want the work. I would rather have the kiss of my little child. I would rather have you come and say, 'Papa, I'm glad to see you back.'"

And, many a time you and I have gone on cheating Christ with work instead of love. He is good. He allows you to do a little work, bless his name! but he is hungry for your love. I say again, your work another can do, but your love another cannot give. He wants you to see him—let the fishing alone.

Many a time you and I would do better to drop the labor and go to seeing. Drop it all. That will save us from nervous exhaustion. That will save us from a break down, when we realize that our souls commune with Jesus Christ. You will not fish less, but you will fish more effectually.

Jesus has not come, and they go splashing in the water—a poor substitute for what Jesus sent them to do. I think there is hope in this difficulty between the disciples and Jesus because, in all circles of love, difficulties arise.

Certain pages in the diary of Samuel Rutherford, a very holy man, were brought out in an unexpected way some few years ago. On one page this appeared: "Janet and I had a rippet to-day." Janet is his wife. He is known in Scottish history as a man devoted to his family. What has happened to his house to-day, what is a "rippet"? Well, it's a little difference in opinion, that's all. He goes on to say with sundown they made it up.

Bless God! Jesus does not publish my quarrels in the market place. When a "rippet" comes on, he does not go and tell it, he just takes steps to end it.

My hope is that Jesus, when they have learned the lesson, will end it for they cannot exist very long in this state of estrangement from Jesus. I expect as the fishermen row in, poor, disappointed men, having caught nothing, that there is one on the shore, and he says, "Children, have ye any meat?" They answer, "Nothing." He says "Cast your net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," and they cast the net, and what a haul! They say, "It is the Lord." Jesus ends the quarrel, doesn't he? He lets himself be seen by them. And I know when Simon Peter hears it is the Lord, he girds his fisher's coat about him and flings himself into the sea and strikes out for the shore, and the man who was sent to go seeing, and proposed to go fishing, is now to go swimming to see Jesus! He is a queer leader. It is all made up. He sees Jesus, and there is a fire of coals there, and a fish. If I had been there I would have liked a bit of the fish that was there before they came ashore—the fish that Jesus provided. Just give me a little of Jesus' fish. Their fishes and his fish make up a feast.

What lessons there are there! He needs us after all. He will not make up the menu for the hungry world without us. He needs you after all. Do you notice that the Apostle Paul always considered service grace? It is a gift. He can do without it. He has arranged so that he takes our service, and as Andrew Bonar used to say, he did not believe there was a "soul in heaven but what had a human thumb mark on it."

One day I was shifting my library and one of my little boys came to me and said, "I want to work, I want to help you, Papa."

I didn't say, "You can't help me very much, the stairs are wide, and the books are big." No, I said, "Of course, you can help me."

How he brightened! He took hold of the biggest book in the study, almost as large as himself, and puffing and panting and clasping that big volume he started up the stairs. Presently I heard a big thump, and looking up the stairway I did not know which was book and which was boy coming down the steps together. Did I dismiss him? No, I just took him up, he clutched the book, and I clutched him, and I carried him and the book too. We did the library well.

Aye, that's what Jesus does. He carries you and the work too. He carries you and the burden. He says, "You can do a lot for me." The grace of service. A co-operative feast, and Jesus says, "Come and dine." The word is not exactly "dine," but it is a colloquial word among the fishermen. It is a word meaning a fisherman's breakfast. It is not dinner, it is not sitting down. It is a bite on the run. I have seen a fisherman come in from the sea, and the wife would have breakfast all ready. But the fisherman would not sit down. He is all scaly with fish. It is "a bit and rin." What for? There is a great deal of work to be done yet. The nets have to be washed and the boats scrubbed.

Jesus says, "Take a bite and run, there is much to do." Every blessing is a fisherman's breakfast. It is not dinner time yet. Bye and bye the dinner bell will ring,

and we will go into the feast of God. It is a foretaste now. It is a fisherman's breakfast, and if you get breakfast, go on then. There is work to be done.

There is an old wreck on the shores of Scotland in the autumn time. At last by drifting coastward it has been brought in. There is not a sign of life on board. Aye, there is a poor sailor, after weeks of abstinence, dried up and almost expiring from want of food, lying on the deck, and they pour cordials down the dying man's throat. He is reviving a little, and his lips are moving. What is he saying? "There's another man." And down in the hold they find another man expiring, and they get him too.

Aye, beloved, the world is dying. If Jesus comes and revives you with the cordial of his blessing, there is another soul. It is a fisherman's breakfast, not to feast and go to sleep, but a bite, and run to the work.—Rev. John Robertson, D. D., Glasgow, Scotland.

A GREAT FALL.

J. WILBUR CHAPMAN, D.D.

And now Peter sat without in the palace.—Matt. xxvi: 69.

There are three ways to read this text. The first is to place the emphasis on the word "now." And if you emphasize this word you have the account of the man's downfall, and it seems to me that you have here lifted up before you the sharpest warning in the New Testament.

Second, you may read the verse "Now Peter *sat.*" That was a dangerous thing to do. The psalmist says, you know, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." It is unsafe to stand in the presence of temptation; it is still more dangerous to sit by the fire of the enemy.

Third, you may read it, "Now Peter sat *without.*" There is a circle in which Peter and the rest of us find ourselves if we are to be true to the Master—the circle of faithfulness. That circle is composed of several circles with concentric centers. It is bounded by prayer. It matters not what you may be to-day, you are in danger if you have neglected the life of prayer. It is bounded by Bible study. One single verse of Scripture, constantly meditated on, is a secret source of strength and power. It is bounded by faith and service. You know your danger was not when you were serving Christ, but when you were in idleness.

I. It is necessary to understand this story for you to be introduced to Peter. I think there are many here who will agree with me when I say that with the exception of Jesus Christ himself, Peter is the man in the New Testament that the people most like. When I read John and Paul their power and perfection discourage me, but Peter is bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, and I have certain things for you to notice about him. First of all he was so sincere. It may not seem so to you, for he was always promising service which he did not perform, but when you know him more thoroughly, you will know he was just as honest as a man could be. Second I like him for his courage. When all the other disciples had forsaken Christ completely, Peter had the courage to "stand not far off." I like him because of his en-

thusiasm. If you answer me that this is the reason he so often failed, I will answer you that the world does not owe so very much to its over-cautious people. Peter was a man desperately in earnest.

I like him again for his writings. The epistles of Peter are said to be written in the purest Greek of any in the New Testament. To me they are like nothing so much as a precious diamond. Where did Peter get this diamond? I will tell you.

A long time ago a stranger took passage on an ocean steamer without registering his name. One evening when the ship's orchestra was playing, the stranger stepped up to the conductor and said civilly, "If you would make the tempo a little faster, it would improve the piece you are playing." The leader paid no attention to the intruder, but the next night the stranger had procured from the steerage somewhere an old violin, out of tune, and damaged. He again presented himself to the leader, and said, "Now I will show you what I mean." The musicians were expecting some sport and let him play, but it was not a moment before they knew they were listening to an artist. The violinist was Ole Bull. The violin was nothing, but the violinist was everything. Peter was only a fisherman, but Jesus Christ was the musician, and Peter's epistles are just the spirit of Jesus manifesting itself in him.

Again I like his preaching. I am persuaded that I could preach like Peter this morning, if I were only to pay the price. We may not all be great intellectually, but there is not a man of us who cannot be saturated with the word of God, and be the kind of a preacher that moves his hearers because he is set on fire of the Scripture.

II. Then I want to say a word about Peter's denials.

Now what were the denials of Jesus? The first was at the wicket gate. "I am not a disciple of Jesus," said Peter. The second denial was at the fire, where Peter said, that he knew not the name of Jesus. I think that it is a sad thing that we people in the Church that have seen Christ must warm ourselves at the enemy's fire. Somebody said to me the other day, "Is it wrong, do you think, to dance, to play cards, to go the theater?" I want to answer that it is a shameful thing that we should think of turning aside to the world for our pleasures, when we have once found Christ.

The third denial was when Jesus was being led away. Peter had again denied him and he turned and looked at Peter.

III. In this chapter of the gospel, also, you will find all the stages of Peter's downfall. Peter was boastful, "Though all men should be offended I will never!"

Again Peter was not watchful.

Third, Peter, and all the disciples forsook him. But then you have all done that. How about the day you let go past without reading your Bible? How about the day you let go past without prayer? That is forsaking Jesus. Men, you go down in the world not because you are weak, but because you do not keep step with Jesus Christ.

Fourth: "And Peter followed afar off." Will you allow me to tell you when you fall? It was not when twice every Sunday you were in Church, and when you prayed every day; when you read your Bible regularly; when you were found in your regular weekly prayer-meetings.

I want to bring my message to a close this morning with these denials of Peter which were so associated with the suffering of Jesus. Peter denied him three times and the last time Jesus turned and looked at him. Then it was that Peter wept tears of blood. You thought it was your own business when you denied Christ in your business. It was a blow at Christ.

Have you denied Christ? If you have, do not be discouraged. He was the Savior of John, of Paul, of all the rest; but it is the most encouraging thing of all to remember that he was the Savior of Peter.—Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, D. D.

TYPES OF CHURCHES.

A. C. DIXON.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.—Rev. ii: 11

In the seven churches of Asia we have pictures of the churches of to-day, and it is our purpose to listen to the message of the Spirit which comes to us through them.

I. The backslidden church.

There is the backslidden church at Ephesus. It was orthodox in creed and deed. The Spirit says of them, "Thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

But it was orthodoxy on ice. Opposition to the evil was so intense that enthusiasm for the good was frozen. They were ecclesiastical warriors. They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, but they failed to love the Nicolaitanes themselves. It is well to hate wickedness and error, but when this hatred dries up our love for the wicked and the erring we have backslidden. God hates evil, but he is love. While we hate sin we should love sinners, and nothing in the church of Christ can take the place of love.

II. The rich poor church.

To the poor church in Smyrna the Spirit wrote: "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." It seems to have been a sort of down-town church, from which the wealthy members had moved to the suburbs. It was surrounded by organized opposition. It was next door to "the synagogue of Satan." It walked in the furnace of martyrdom, and God gave to them what seemed to be a gloomy promise that the Devil should cast some of them into prison, and they should have tribulation even unto death. There is a poverty of wealth, and a wealth of poverty. This church had the wealth of poverty, poor in purse, but rich in grace. Its treasures were in heaven, and best of all the living Christ was with them.

III. The compromising church.

There were faithful martyrs among the members of the church at Pergamos, who were willing to give up their lives rather than to deny the faith of Christ. At the same time there were among them those who "held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication."

The pastor of this church seemed to believe in a mixed membership of believers and unbelievers, gnostics and agnostics, good and bad. He had great respect for the character of the faithful, but he would not refuse to the Balaamites the privilege of believing and acting as they pleased.

It was the paradise of the Nicolaitanes, who believed that the church should be married to the world.

In the beginning God divided the light from darkness, and he has been in this dividing business ever since. He will continue it until finally there will be only two worlds, one of light and one of darkness. The church of Christ is a called-out, separated, consecrated people, "in the world but not of it," and when we drag down the

church to the level of the world, instead of lifting the world to the level of the church, we are doing the work of Satan rather than of God.

IV. The erring woman's church.

The church at Thyatira seems to have been ruled and ruined by a woman named Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, teaching and practicing the most abominable things. Now woman is usually an angel of light, or a demon of darkness. She is nearly always aggressively good or bad.

A good woman in the church is an angel of loving ministry; her sympathy, her prayers, her testimony, her character, her patient persistence, her purity are powers for God. But a proud, worldly, pleasure-seeking woman who wears her religion as she does her diamonds, for show, can do an immense amount of harm. God be praised for the Phœbes who are the true servants of the church.

The fact that the Scriptures do not provide for her ordination to the ministry does not contract her sphere, while it harmonizes with the fitness of things, but the Lord have mercy upon the church when Jezebel leads and rules.

It is a noteworthy fact that the three great modern apostasies took their rise in the brain and influence of woman. Spiritualism came from the Fox sisters, and has grown more corrupt and corrupting. "Christian Science" was founded by a woman. To say that it is neither Christian nor science is to speak the sober truth. It is the art of making sensible people feel and act as if they were deranged. Theosophy comes to us in modern guise from the brain of Madame Blavatsky. It is really the revival of the effete paganism which has been dead and buried in its native land for hundreds of years. Only a woman could have unearthed its corpse, and with her gentle, delicate touch have painted it into the semblance of life.

God be praised for the good movements that have been led by women, assisted and encouraged by their godly husbands, brothers and friends, but the Devil only is to be thanked for these great departures from the faith.

V. The merely nominal Church.

The church of Sardis had a name to live but was dead. Very active with many kinds of organization. There was doubtless scarcely any need for the theater in Sardis, for this church furnished theatrical performances for the people. It had big concerts, big fairs, big socials, and little prayer meetings.

The services held for the salvation of lost souls were not popular. Evangelism was dead. There may have been a gorgeous ritual, artistic singing, rhetorical preaching, a splendid display, but no real life, simply a galvanized corpse—powdered and painted death. I leave you to say whether such churches exist to-day.

VI. The faithful church.

The Spirit has no word of criticism for the church at Philadelphia. Before them is an open door and they are entering it. With little strength, they have depended upon God and obeyed his Word. The synagogue of Satan has been compelled to acknowledge their supremacy.

Their activity proceeds from spiritual life within. Their meetings for praise and prayer are full; the Gospel is believed and honored by pulpit and pew. Their name expresses the fellowship which prevails. It is truly a church of brotherly love. Such a church is like the sun in the heavens; it cannot be hid.

VII. The half-hearted church.

The church at Laodicea is lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. God is disgusted with them. If there is nothing in Christianity, it deserves our opposition, and we should be hot against it. If there is anything in Christianity, there is everything, and we should be hot for it. There is no room for half-heartedness, no neutral ground, no excuse for indifference. This church at Laodicea felt rich, plenty of money, good social position, fine organization. There was just one thing lacking, Christ was on the

outside. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." It was Christianity without Christ.

I wish that I could give you the substance and spirit of a sermon I once heard a black man of the South preach on this text: "Behold I stand at the door and knock." Every sentence had broken grammar, but good religion in bad grammar is very much better than bad religion in good grammar, and we cared very little for his grammar while we listened to his fervent thought and earnest appeal. "There are two sides to this subject," he said, "first the outside, and, second, the inside. Firstly, Jesus is on the outside knocking, and you are on the inside holding the door with your hand on the bolt. He knocks, you hold. There is coming a time when you will be on the outside and Jesus on the inside and while you knock, he will hold. Open the door, brethren, and let him in; that he may open the door then and let you in, for unless he enters your heart and sups with you here, you will not be prepared to enter his heaven and sup with him there."

The cure for half-heartedness is the presence and fellowship of Jesus Christ. The church is his. Let him administer through the Holy Spirit its affairs. By his presence every evil will be cast out, all disorder will be cured, and the glory of heaven will have begun.—Rev. A. C. Dixon, D. D.

FIRST THINGS FIRST.

J. ROSS STEVENSON.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God.—Matt. vi: 33.

I wish to speak to you to-night upon the importance of putting first things first, or of placing the emphasis where it rightly belongs. The meaning of a sentence is often determined by the place of emphasis. Exact truth may be written only to be perverted by a wrong stress of voice, and the meaning of life will be determined not only by what we put into it and by what we leave out of it, but by what we emphasize. First things must be put first. The primary must come before the secondary. The subordinate must make way for the supreme.

I once heard an able preacher speaking of "the malignance of a false perspective." He spoke of little things, good enough in their places, but which become evils when brought to the front and unduly enlarged. Most of us have seen the effects produced by an ill-adjusted camera, when the right focus has not been produced,—perhaps the picture of a beautiful little child with the feet as large as the whole body, a monstrosity! But if the angels in heaven could see some of the pictures which we take of life, it would no doubt occasion a great deal of celestial merriment, if it were not so unspeakably sad. A small coin, a little piece of lace held up to obscure the whole field of one's vision! A small insignificant purpose may so engage the attention as to defeat the great and worthy aims in life. It was once customary to build observatories in the heart of the city, but now that is no longer done. They are erected in the country on some high eminence where the atmosphere is clear and quiet, and the scientific observer "can draw the thing as he sees it, for the God of things as they are." And if

you and I are to see this world in its proper light, if we are to relate it to the whole universe of God, we must get upon some high eminence, where we shall not be deceived by things brought near, and the atmosphere through which we look will be clarified and made pure and sweet by the sunlight of God's love.

I. According to the perfect ideal, this vision of Jesus Christ, who stood in the proper position, because of his relation to God and to eternity, to judge things aright, according to his estimate, what are the things that are of supreme worth, the things which we must not neglect, for, if we do so, it will be at our eternal peril? He has given an answer in different ways. You remember his word to Martha, who was so anxious about her household cares that she had not time to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn his word,—how he told her that only one thing was needful and that Mary had chosen that good part which could never be taken away from her. In other words, to listen to Jesus, to receive his truth, to stand in personal relations to him, to submit to his direction, is of greater importance than any anxious thought about our daily task, important as that task may be in its place. You remember again what he said to the rich young ruler when he inquired what he must do to inherit eternal life. How much he had to commend him! His education, his social position, his morality, and yet all that had little value as compared with that one thing which he lacked—a heart fully surrendered to God. There was the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the wise having oil in their vessels. It is a lesson to show us that we should have reserve of character so that we shall be prepared for sudden emergencies, even that greatest and important emergency, when the Lord himself shall come.

But our Lord's most specific word on this topic is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all things else will be added unto you." By the kingdom of God we mean the supremacy of his rule in all departments of life. We seek that kingdom first when we strive to enter into it, when we strive to conduct ourselves as good citizens, when always subjecting our wills to the will of the Lord, and as Christians endeavoring to extend that kingdom throughout the world. That kingdom represents what the church practically stands for, since the kingdom of God is simply the church of God at work in the world. Hence it would not be perverting these words to say, "Seek identification with the Church of Christ, seek those things for which the Church of God stands in the world."

II. It is true that membership in the Church does not necessarily mean that the man or woman puts first things first. That is what it ought to mean, because our membership pledges us as loyal to Christ and his kingdom, and the Church stands for our being right and doing right.

III. Then membership in the kingdom of Christ relates us not only to the present life but to the life that is to come. It means life that is centered on Christ, life that makes life supreme. The Christo-centric life is the only life that moves in a true orbit and reflects the glory of the other world. And yet there are a good many people even in these days who would reverse the order which Jesus has given, and read his message something like this: "Seek ye first the kingdom and all things else will be subtracted from you." This is a mistaken and perverted view of life that comes from an evil eye that fills the body with darkness and makes one choose the worst while flattering himself that he will also receive the best. I believe it was Galileo who said that the better is the enemy of the best; and there are many things which are good in their way that become sources of evil because they are put in place of the best.

IV. A great deal of inability to believe and indisposition to put forth the efforts required by religion is due to over-occupation with other things. When Professor Pritchard of Oxford was once asked if it was not the tendency of scientific thinking to unsettle religious faith and devotion, he replied, "It is pre-occupation of mind rather

than science that is, and always has been, the prolific parent of skepticism and religious indifference." And then he went on to ask, "Are not the pre-occupations of high positions, of ambition, of literature, of money getting and money spending, of conceit, of sensual habits and even of idleness, at least as unfriendly to the hearty acceptance of Christian revelation as are the pre-occupations of scientific pursuits?" This witness is true. A great many men of strong minds flatter themselves that they do investigate religion and have not been able to accept it when as a matter of fact they have been neglecting it for other pursuits and have never given it any continued thought or attention.

In his book, "The Education of the Heart," Dr. Watkinson calls attention to the culture that is being given to the soul and conscience of man, while the heart which ought to be the center of his being is often the most contemptible part, because its culture is so woefully neglected. By way of illustration he alludes to that beautiful flower, the poinsetta, in which the leaves close to the bud take on such a rich color that they are often mistaken for the blossom itself, which is, however, a very insignificant thing. And so men cultivate their secondary powers to a brilliant hue while the heart is shamefully neglected and appears miserably small. As Ruskin has said, "Taste is not only the index of morality, it is the only morality." The first and foremost question that can be addressed to any of us, and the most searching one is: "What do you like? Tell me what you like and I will tell you what you are." Alas for us if we do not like the best, if we do not put heart into what is eternal and of enduring worth. You remember the Old Testament king who became so absorbed in this, that, and the other thing, that he neglected his chief duty, and his only excuse was, "As thy servant was busy here and there he was gone." And shall we permit ourselves to become so interested, so absorbed, so busy in pleasure, in toil, in the ambitions of life, that we have no place for Jesus Christ?

On the other hand, you cannot find a Christian who makes Jesus King, who puts his kingdom first, and his rule over life as supreme, who is not happy and useful, a blessing to society, and being used of God in his day and his generation.

I have read somewhere that on one occasion Jenny Lind was invited by the king of her country to sing in the royal palace at a festival, but it was to be held on the Sabbath, and her conscience would not allow her to sing at any such public gatherings on the Lord's Day. She refused to come. The king came in person and pleaded with her, and her only response was: "There is a higher King, your majesty. I owe my first allegiance to him." She put Christ first and made him the real king of her life. And if there are any of you here this evening who have not thus enthroned him, even though you may have as much to commend you as the rich young ruler did who came to his Lord, if you have not yet enthroned him, you lack one thing, which is the supreme thing, the all-important thing, as you consider this world and your life as related to God and eternity. Would that you might hear the Master speak to you to-night through this message that I have tried to give in his name, teaching you that no matter what your aims are, without Christ your life is incomplete, unsymmetrical, disfigured, a ruin; but with him life is harmonized, well ordered, under complete control, and crowned with glory and with honor.—Rev. J. Ross Stevenson, D. D., New York.

THE OUTPOURED SPIRIT.

F. B. MEYER.

Until the spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.—Isa. xxxii: 15.

These words were originally addressed to the women of Israel who dwelt at ease, and who thrice over are described as careless, that is, thoughtless daughters. Women, after all, are our prophetesses and priestesses; if they become unspiritual and worldly, there is nothing to arrest the deterioration of society. As the vestal virgins of old watched the sacred fire in their temple at Rome, so women must guard the fire of inspiration and devotion that burns in the home and church.

In addressing the thoughtless women in his time, wrapped in the pleasure of the passing hour, and regardless of the storm which was beginning to brood over their land, Isaiah addresses us all.

I. Exposition.

The women are called upon to smite their breasts for the desolation that would overtake their land. Thorns and briars would take the place of vines in the vineyards and corn in the harvest fields.

Then would supervene the advent of the divine Spirit. All the land had waited for his coming, repeating in various voices with special emphasis the word "Until." Then the Spirit would be poured out from on high. The word translated "poured out" might be rendered "emptied out," as though there were a cloud-burst; as if the walls of the heavenly reservoir had been suddenly broken down, and the contents had rushed in one mighty stream to the low levels of the valleys; as though a Niagara had become unloosed.

The result of this spiritual cloud-burst would be that the wildernesses would be reclaimed and become fruitful fields, whilst the fruitful fields would be as frequent as forests were, covering the hill with their shaggy growth. But not only so, judgment would dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness should abide in the fruitful fields.

Even this would not suffice to realize the divine purposes of love, "for the work of righteousness would be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever."

II. Application.

(1) To the individual.—In the inner life there are seasons of desolation, when thorns and briars of evil dispositions break in upon the placidity of the spirit, when our fruitfulness turns to barrenness, when the watch-tower of hope and the fort of resistance to evil are broken down, and when unclean and abominable things occupy the shrines of the soul. Then we relinquish prayer, neglect the reading of God's Word, and become apathetic and careless in religious service, so that there is nothing for it except to wait for and seek the outpouring of the Spirit from on high.

When he comes all is altered. So soon as the risen and exalted Christ bestows him, our wildernesses become fruitful fields.

It is necessary to notice the divine order. So long as the soul is out of harmony

with the righteousness of God, it must experience this inward desolation. The first effect of the Spirit's work is righteousness. Those who practiced dark and superstitious arts at Ephesus, as soon as they caught sight of and experienced the righteousness of God, came and burnt their books.

The immediate effect of a religious revival, like that which is passing through Wales, is ethical. Men cross the mountains, or will walk long distances, in order to repay debts which they have long repudiated; women will kneel in prayer beside women whom they have sued in the law courts; confessions will be made and apologies uttered so soon as the Spirit is given.

Then the sowing comes. When the heart is right with God and at peace with itself, it is prodigal in scattering the seeds which, borne forward by the waters, become germs of salvation far down their banks.

(2) To the home.—How many happy homes there are in Wales to-day because the Spirit of God has been emptied out in such divine and rich prodigality! Where bickering, jealousy, and misunderstanding prevailed, harmony and goodwill are installed! Nothing makes a home so perfectly blessed as the entrance of the Spirit.

(3) To the church.—Often into a Christian community the briars and thorns of mutual jealousy and dislike intrude. Fellow-communicants manifest no love to each other, but, on the contrary, are separated by the frigid barriers of suspicion. What should be a united flock is split up into a number of cliques, as was the Corinthian church to which Paul addressed his remonstrances. Under these circumstances what wonder if there be an end to fruit-bearing or that evil heresies and vain ceremonies intrude, or that the numbers of the congregation diminish? What is there to attract the outsiders or young people in a church which only lives in name, whilst its heart is dead?

But what a difference when the Spirit of God comes. Then the crowds come flocking together, and the singing of God's praises has a new sweetness, which no choir, however highly trained, could impart to it. Then the places of the teachers and workers are filled with volunteers, then love and peace prevail with a winsome attractiveness which acts like a spell upon the obdurate and reluctant.

III. Enforcement.

When may we expect the emptying out of the Holy Spirit?

(1) We must put away known sin.—"Turn you at my reproof." The four conditions which are perpetually insisted upon by the young miner who is associated with the great spiritual awakening to which we have alluded are: The forgiveness of every past sin, renunciation of every questionable practice, forgiveness of all enemies, and instant obedience to the leading of the Spirit.

Three of these evidently refer to the cleansing of ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, so that we may perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Well would it be for each of us to ask the Holy Spirit to indicate to us any unrighteousness in heart or life, submitting ourselves to him for cleansing and deliverance.

(2) We must put Christ in his rightful place as king. There must be a triumphal entrance into our heart of Immanuel, the rightful King of Man-soul.

(3) We must allow the condition of a lost world to lie heavily upon our heart. That it lies heavily on Christ is indubitable.

We must ask that that burden may be passed on to us, and that we may bear it with our Lord. It is in proportion as we shall enter into his soul travail that we shall be able to help him in the redemption of men through the outpouring of his Spirit.

(4) We must give ourselves to expectant prayer. We are told that for thirteen months God's young servant, whom he has so greatly honored, has given himself to unceasing prayer and supplication. Is it wonderful that he has been so marvelously used, or that he is content to be in the background, not seeking to be the leader of the

great movement which is to sweep through the world, yet being a leader by reason of his great humility and unobtrusiveness! Only prayer can induce that self-emptying which is the first requisite of widespread serviceableness.

The difficulty of the present day is not on God's side, but on the side of the church. The church will listen to sermons, will initiate missions, will create organizations, but the last thing she will do is to pray, and because prayer is wanting all else is comparatively valueless. Once the church is brought to her knees, then the set time to favor her will arrive, and the Spirit will be emptied out from on high.—Rev. F. B. Meyer, Christ Church, London, England.

GLORYING IN THE CROSS.

CHARLES C. ALBERTSON, D.D.

God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Gal. vi: 14.

It is a perfectly natural thing to glory in something. Men glory in various things according to their possessions and dispositions. Some glory in their wealth, some in their learning, some in their ancestry, some in their power over other men, some in their popularity, some in their righteousness, and some in their sins. It is often true that men glory in that which should be their shame.

It is not at all objectionable to hold some privileges and possessions in high esteem. That a man has amassed a comfortable fortune by industry and prudent foresight; that he has trained his mind to think and enriched it with truth; that he has some honored antecedents; that he has those qualities of self-reliance and contagious ardor which make him capable of leadership; that he has grappled to his heart with hoops of steel a host of friends;—these are things of which a man may be justly proud. These are qualities a man may cultivate, and possessions he may guard with jealous care. Yet not one of these is worth enough to justify a man in considering it his chief end, and his highest good. Therefore he may not glory in it. What a man glories in, that he not only loves, but loves above all other things. Say it all by saying, what a man glories in he lives for and would die for, if it were necessary. Loving it thus, his love for that he glories in is the supreme affection of his heart, above all other loves, above the love of life itself.

There are four degrees of attachment the human nature is capable of. They are, inclination, fondness, love and glory. I must choose something that is worthy of the highest degree of attachment. Surely nothing that is not immortal is. There was Paul who wrote this text. Than he, there never lived a greater man. He was a scholar but he never gloried in his scholarship; a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, but he did not glory in his illustrious lineage; a born leader, but he did not glory in his power to move men; ambitious, but he never sought personal aggrandizement; a man of quenchless enthusiasm, but he never gloried in his superior zeal; a philosopher, but he never made philosophy the subject of a single discourse. He had one theme above all other themes, one thought to which all other thoughts were tributary, and that was Christ and him crucified. He might have preached about Christ the

Orator, or Christ the Poet, or Christ the Socialist, but he did not. His text was always Christ the crucified. Everywhere he went he exalted that name.

We must not suppose that Paul glorified, nor must we glory, in the literal cross upon which Christ died, nor in any mere effigy of it. He was no worshiper of relics. We have no record that he ever exhibited a splinter or a nail from the true cross. A gilded cross upon one's breast, upon a mantelpiece, upon an altar or a church spire, however beautiful, is nothing in itself to glory in. Form is one thing, force another.

The Cross in which Paul gloried, the Cross which is the glory of the Christian heart to-day, is all that system of truth historical and doctrinal, by which Jesus Christ is presented to the world as the sinless Savior of a sinful world. This is the force of which the Passion Cross, the Greek Cross, the Maltese Cross, the Rose Cross, and all other Crosses are but the signs.

Why do we glory in the Cross?

I. Because it reveals the character of God. It is a wise and suggestive saying, a saying that means much more than may appear to you who hear it at first, that the interrogation point stands for man's best effort in his own behalf; the Cross stands for God's best effort in man's behalf! The Cross is the key to God's moral government. It reveals God's eternal purpose of redemption. It interprets God's will with reference to man.

The heavens declare God's glory. The firmament showeth his handiwork. A thousand forms in nature magnify God's wisdom and his might. The Ten Commandments tell us God is Holy. The penalties of sin tell us he is just. But not until Christ dies do we know how much God thinks of man. What does he think of man? Look at the Cross. "God so loved the world," etc. "Behold what manner of love," etc. Long had God's light flooded earth's hills and valleys, but it had blinded men by its very brightness. On Calvary love held out a prism to separate the rays, and make them plain to men. This is why we glory in the Cross. It tells us that we are valuable to God. He gave himself for us, for he was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. The Cross is his method of reconcilement. The Cross is the way to God.

II. Moreover, we glory in the Cross because of its moral power.

The Cross as I have reminded you, stands for the love of God. Of all known powers in the universe, short of omnipotence, love is the greatest. Indeed, God's love is linked with his omnipotence. And what moral power there is in divine love let the transfigured lives of ten thousand Christian men and women tell.

Take the life of that man who was a native Scotchman, a stone-mason (he helped to build Chicago after the fire of 1871), and an infidel, the president of an atheistic club. He whipped his brother because he would not quit praying, and his brother conquered him by keeping on praying. One night in St. Louis that unbelieving, hard-headed, hard-fisted Scotch stone-mason got a sight of the Cross, and when he thought of his sins he trembled like a sapling in the wind, and fell to praying, and presently he found himself in the arms of God's wonderful love. He is a Christian pastor now and preaches every Sunday to congregations that crowd one of the greatest churches in Protestant Christendom.

There was another man who belonged to a German Turnverein. He was chosen chairman, and a part of the inauguration ceremony was to drink a gallon of beer at midnight while the clock was striking. He drank it—a schooner at each stroke—twelve schoolers in twelve strokes. Intemperate, profane, reckless, he got a sight of the Cross, and it made him a new man, and he happens to be a minister, too.

Oh the moral power of the Cross! Life-imparting, joy bringing, peace-giving, it is the power of God unto salvation. I glory in it. Anything that can take a man from the lowest stratum of society, and make him right, and keep him right, carries with it sufficient evidence of its divine origin.

III. We may glory in the Cross, because of the certainty of its ultimate triumph. It has not yet conquered the world. It is still a stumbling stone to some, and foolishness to others, but its history has been one of continual conquest, and the past presages the future.

The Cross has never yet turned back. It never will. It met Judaism in its first century and conquered it. It met Pagan philosophy in the second, third and fourth centuries and conquered it. It met English Deism in the last century and conquered it. It met French skepticism and conquered it. The Cross will win new victories long after its present enemies have found the earthly mercy of oblivion. It has conquered every competitor that it has met. It is winning new victories every day.

"The star of Bethlehem is rising on the night of Asia," are the words of Keshub Chunder Sen, the founder of the Brahmo Somaj society of India. "Christianity is the only living religion," says Professor Max Muller of Oxford, the greatest Orientalist of his day,—"all other religions are either dead or dying."

It has only been a little while since a Hindoo priest who spent seven years to refute Christianity, was converted and walked a hundred miles to be baptized. Before the ceremony was performed he said, "My parents named me for a heathen god, Waradappa, but now I want to be called Yesu Dasa, the slave of Jesus." That is what Paul called himself, "the slave of Jesus Christ," and it was he who said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross."—Rev. Charles C. Albertson, D.D.

CHARACTER AND CLEANSING.

WILTON MERLE SMITH.

I have understood that two main thoughts are to run through this conference: character and service. The thought that ought to be with us for our opening service is the thought of character and the thought that naturally follows it, namely, of cleansing. I think it is Emerson who says, "What you are speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say." He meant that what you are is far more eloquent than any words that could flow from your lips; that the influence of your character is what after all is doing the greatest preaching in your life, and that no matter what a man says, the power that really comes from his life is that unconscious influence that emanates from what a man really is. The scientist tells us that a bit of steel is made up of an infinite number of atoms, which although bound so closely together that they make a single substance, in reality do not touch each other, for an infinitesimal space separates each from the other, and yet if we took the piece of steel and struck it with a blow, the impact of that blow communicates itself from atom to atom until it is felt throughout; in other words you cannot touch a single atom but all the others feel it. Society is that kind of a body, we individuals are the atoms, and yet so closely are we bound together by the laws which make society, that whatever influences you, influences me, and whatever influences me, influences you, and it is of vastest concern to me what you are and what your character is, because standing at my side you powerfully influence and compel me in the line of my character. There is no subject in electrical science more interesting to me than the subject of induced currents. If you let two

wires be strung alongside of each other, and send a strong electric current over one, the result will be a weak reproduction of that current along the other. This is why when you listen through a telephone and you hear other voices, the wires are not crossed as you think, but the current over the wire which hangs near your own has induced a weak reproduction of those sounds upon the wire which you are using. The same thing is happening every day in society. Moral influence is nothing less than induced currents. Why was it that when you stood before a friend who is selfish, you instantly had to fight that same temptation in your own heart? The reason was that the strong current of selfishness with which that life is imbued, induced a similar current in your own heart, and for a moment you had to fight against it. No one is so debased that he does not feel the induced current towards righteousness when standing before someone who is pure and holy; and no one, on the other hand, is so pure and Christ-like that he does not feel the influences toward sin and those influences that are ignoble when standing before that which is base and untrue.

The whole question that is thrown before us in vivid relief is the responsibility for our influence and our character. Look at Jeroboam. Eighteen times it is written of him in the Bible, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who caused his people to sin;" that sentence is the monument of the man. I think sometimes I would take my chances with Pontius Pilate at the bar of justice rather than be that man who by the awful influence in his national life led a nation to sin. And yet it may be true that some of us may be Jeroboams in the world. Here is a man at the head of a great business enterprise; there are young men under him, learning from him business methods and habits; it is possible for a man of sterling righteousness and integrity to be a fountain head, a great stream of integrity which shall run with increasing force as long as time shall last; or it is possible again by indirection in his business, by failure to give scrupulous care that all his dealings are filled with integrity, for that same man so to influence the young men under him that he shall become the fountain head of a great stream of unrighteousness which shall curse the world as long as time shall last. It is possible for any of us in our own homes to be fountain heads of a stream of blessing or of cursing which shall flow on forever through this world. What you are speaks so loud, I cannot hear what you say, and the influence of your character is telling in your college; it is bound to tell in your home and in the home which may possibly be yours, and all the power of that character is being made evident in the world either for the uplifting of the world or for the downpulling of humanity. What are you? That is the question. God help us to search our own hearts in the presence of the awful truth of the responsibility of the influence of our own character. Are we ready to say with the psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me?"

There is a mark of a carnal Christian that is to be found in the third chapter, third verse, first Corinthians. "Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions." In the fifth chapter he mentions other sins, as inconsistency of various kinds. I fancy as we look this matter in the face at the very outset and talk of jealousy and pride and covetousness and high temper, and a few other things that make our lives so inconsistent, we will say, "Yes, Lord, I am carnal." And then there is another mark of a carnal Christian, in the first chapter of Malachi, And ye bring unto me the halt and the lame and the blind for an offering instead of bringing the first fruits of the flock, the lamb without blemish.

And then the other mark of the carnal Christian is strife all the time. There is Paul's word in the seventh chapter of Romans, "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."

Let us turn now in the second place to the thought of relief; to the thought of cleansing, as we find it pictured in God's holy word. Where can I find my cleansing?

I love to take those old texts in Romans, the eighth chapter, to start in where Paul says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." What man could not do God did. We read that sin was killed, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." I can be cleansed from my sin in the cross because at the cross sin is condemned and our sin is done away. Can I understand it? Not fully. I do not think we shall ever realize the fullness or meaning of the cross until we know what Satan's object was in bringing Christ to the cross. What Satan desired to compass was the separation of spirit between Jesus and the Father. He wanted to break down the obedience of the man, so he gathered all his forces to hurl against the defenseless head of Jesus; not to compass the physical death but to break down his obedience; to make Jesus curse his Father so that that holy, stainless life would not be obedient unto death. And Satan knew when that cry, "It is finished," came, that he was defeated and all his hosts were defeated.

A dear old Scotch lady wanted to be admitted into the church. She was examined but she knew nothing about substitutionary sacrifice and justification and many other hard questions, and the pastor said to her, "I think, sister, you would better come and be under one of the elders for a few weeks, and by and by we will receive you," and the woman with tears streaming from her eyes arose to leave and said, "I dinna ken much about these things, but I ken the Lord Jesus died for me and indeed then I would dee for him." The old pastor said, "Come back, come back, I believe you know more about it than all of us."

Now will you let me lead you thirdly and finally to the thought of power? Character, cleansing and power. They are all related, and the gate-way to power is cleansing.

You will never enter into the real cleansing; never enter into peace and glory until you are able to say—anytime—anywhere—what wilt thou have me to do? But the moment you enter there, that moment the very fountain of God's love is broken on your head and the sweetness of it all will be greater and more blessed than you can know. And the end of it all is power. No man can enter through the gate of surrender into the cleansing and into the possession of the Holy Ghost—for it all is one and the same thing—without having power in his life. As Ruskin said, "How strange it is that God does everything so easily. All the planets are held in their cycles, but everything man does is done by iron bars and perspiration." Have you ever done Christian work by iron bars and perspiration, with clenched hands and knotted muscles and veins standing out? In the power of God have you not done infinitely harder tasks for the Master? The power the Holy Ghost gives made Stephen absolutely irresistible; that power took Martin Luther, the humble youth, and hurled him against the ramparts of a corrupt church and the ramparts fell. It is a power that will make you absolutely irresistible; a power that works not by perspiration and iron bars but by the omnipotent might of the Omnipotent God. The power in our lives is not the power of sharpened wit, but the power of a great character baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost. There is no such power on earth; men put their shoes from off their feet before it; and it stands to-day as the greatest might the Lord has sent to men and women.—Record of Christian Work.

CHRIST'S TEACHING ABOUT HIMSELF.

JAMES STALKER, D.D.

Whom say ye that I am?—Matt. xvi: 15.

This question is old, but it is not antiquated. On the contrary, it is the question of the day. It is always the question of the day; for it is put to every one of us: Who and what was Jesus of Nazareth? Many of us have been puzzled and pained with it; and no one acquainted with the thought of our time can be a stranger to the difficulties which it involves. It may be thrust aside; but it comes back again and again; and peace is possible to the earnest mind only in its satisfactory solution.

We all know the answer of orthodoxy: "Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God, became man; and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, for ever." This has been the answer of the Church and her creeds for eighteen hundred years; her thinkers and teachers have answered thus; this is the faith for which her confessors have testified and her martyrs died. This is the teaching of the Bible, too. St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul,—their Christ is a man who was once a little child, who hungered and thirsted, who wept and was tempted, who died and was buried; but he was also the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person.

But there is in the world another view of Christ: many believe that he was merely a man. He was, indeed, they allow, the greatest and best of men. His influence on humanity has been like that of none else; the modern world may be said to be his creation. And he deserved to have this influence; for he was the completest character the world has ever seen—the best model of goodness humanity has ever possessed.

Such are the two contrasted views: how shall we decide between them? Will it not be best to ascertain what Jesus himself said on the subject? If he was nearly as intellectually wise and morally truthful as even the lowest view of him allows, his own testimony about himself ought surely to be decisive.

Let us turn, then, to his own words and see what he says. But at the outset I will make a great concession: I will draw his teaching on this subject only from the first three Gospels. I will do so, not because the record of St. John apears to me less trustworthy than that of the synoptists; but simply because it is objected to. The truth is, *it* teaches our Lord's divinity so distinctly that those who deny that cannot afford to allow its trustworthiness; and they are wont to say that while in the fourth Gospel Christ is set forth as the Son of God, he is in the three first Gospels only the Son of man; and the latter is the authentic portrait.

Well, let us turn to the synoptists and gather Christ's testimony about himself; about I. His Origin; II. His Work on Earth; III. His Death; IV. His Future.

I. *His Origin.*—Those who regard Jesus Christ as only a man usually represent him as having been a great teacher or prophet, who revealed the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; who taught mankind to believe in the value of the soul, and brought life and immortality to light. He was like Moses, or Elijah, or Isaiah, they say, only greater. Now, it is true he was a prophet. So he frequently denom-

inated himself. He applied to himself the grand description in Isaiah of prophetic inspiration: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound." It was in the power of this inspiration that he subsequently preached and unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and this may perhaps be held to be sufficient to explain both his miracles of power and also those miracles of wisdom by which he could discern the unuttered thoughts of men.

But, though this may explain much, it will not explain everything. Although he sometimes called himself a prophet, he intimated at other times that he was more than a member of that inspired line. He spoke of the succession of the prophets as terminating with the Baptist: "The law and the prophets were until John"; but with himself something higher had arrived. So, when referring to another of the prophets, he said, "A greater than Jonah is here." And he said likewise, "A greater than Solomon is here." Even David, the greatest of the kings and the psalmists, had, he hinted to the Pharisees, called him Lord.

The chief characteristic of a prophet always was the sense under which he lived of having been born for a purpose and charged with a message from the Most High to deliver to his fellow-men. Jesus also had this characteristic very conspicuously: he appeared among men as a herald or messenger, as one "sent," and "I am sent" were the opening words of many of his sayings.

While, however, in this respect like the other prophets, his air and his language betrayed a deeper mystery. He would say, "I am come" to do this and that in a way which suggested not that he had come from an interview with God, as any prophet might have done, but that he had come from a home in which he had lived with God before his earthly sojourn commenced.

In perfect harmony with this is the impression which you receive, as you read his words, of an intimacy and authority with which he speaks of things eternal and divine. The whole realm of the future, which is such a mystery to the wisest of mere men, lies naked and open before him, and he speaks of the unseen abodes of the dead, of judgment and eternity, like one perfectly at home with these inscrutable subjects. He always spoke as if he had an original, and not an acquired knowledge of the invisible world. The prophets were constantly in the habit of appealing to the divine authority to confirm their statements: "Thus saith the Lord," was the formula of indorsement with which they stamped their statements; but Jesus did not use this phrase: he substituted for it, "I say unto you," or "Verily, I say unto you," as if this gave to his statements the same emphasis.

These are Christ's own sayings about himself. In the narrative itself we hardly notice them, so completely are they a part of the character. But when we detach them and look closely at them, we perceive how significant they are. We already feel that they are very extraordinary words to come from one who is supposed to be no more than a man.

II. But now let us go on to the second point: His sayings about *his work on earth.* Sometimes Jesus described the purpose for which he had come to the world in terms which might have been appropriated by any prophet—as, when he said, "I must preach the gospel to other cities also, for therefore am I sent"; or, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; or, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." To preach the gospel, to seek the lost sheep, to call sinners to repentance,—these are ordinary descriptions of the work of a prophet or of any religious teacher.

But he claimed at the same time a mission far higher, which no mere man could have been intrusted with: he came not only to seek, but to save, the lost. He claimed

the power on earth to forgive sins, and pronounced over the Magdalene and many another penitent the sentence of forgiveness, thereby bringing down on himself the charge of blasphemy; for who, they said, can forgive sins but God only. To those whose consciences were burdened with guilt, he professed to be able to give that inner calm which can only exist where the condemnation of sin is removed and a right relation to God established. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Salvation being thus procurable through attachment to his person, he claimed authority to call every man to follow him. No other tie could be allowed to hinder anyone whom he called from obeying. No danger or terror could by any means be allowed to interpose. He warned those whom he called that they would be hated of all men for his sake; they would be persecuted and brought before governors and kings; they would even lose their lives.

Why should they be willing to do so? What right had he to demand such sacrifices? Why but because by their attachment to him they obtained that which was better than life, and by separation from him lost it?

He indicated in the most solemn terms that men's fate would depend upon the relation in which they stood to him: by refusing to follow him they would miss their destiny; if they denied him before men, they would be denied at the judgment day; if they confessed him they would be confessed.

Now, what impression does all this make? We are not dealing with one or two isolated texts here and there, whose drift may be doubtful or whose interpretation may be called in question. Here is a whole line of statement—a manifold, varied, but consistent way of speaking about himself. And if there is any meaning in words, it surely proves that Jesus meant to convey the impression that he was more than a mere man.

III. But now let us proceed to the third point: His words about *his death.* At a certain stage of his history Jesus began to predict his own death. This was a great surprise and a great shock to his disciples; and he did not venture to do it till they had attained a certain maturity of experience.

Now, why was he so painstaking about this?

Well, one reason doubtless was that, when the catastrophe came, they might be assured that he had not been taken unawares, but that even this had entered into his outlook and purpose.

But, as he repeats that assurance that he was about to die, we perceive something deeper: This has been predicted in Scripture and therefore must happen.

But even this does not exhaust the mystery: there is a deeper reason for his death; it is determined by a sterner necessity. On the way to Emmaus he asked the two travelers, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" And afterwards to the eleven in the upper room he said, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

What was this mysterious necessity in obedience to which he had to die? Is it not hinted in the last clause of the quotation just made, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name?" This is St. Paul's explanation of the mystery of Christ's death—"He was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification"; "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree."

This great doctrine is not, indeed, developed in Christ's own teaching. But twice, at least, it is plainly enough stated, where he says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"; and where he says, at the institution of the chief sacrament of his religion, "This is my body

which is given for you; . . . this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Who is this whose life is able to be a ransom for many, whose bloodshed can be spoken of as the sacrifice by which a new relationship is established between God and man? What should we say of any mere man who took it upon him to utter such sentiments about himself? "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him." The weak child of Adam needs a ransom for his own sins, instead of paying it for another; and Jesus would have been in this very position if he had been no more than a link in the chain of humanity.

And here, in passing, we ought to refer to a singular hiatus in the words of Jesus. In the prophets, with whom he is compared, there is no feature more prominent than the sense of personal unworthiness. The nearer one gets to the light, the more conscious does he become of his own darkness. Thus Isaiah, for example, cries, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Glory." But there are no such exclamations among the sayings of Jesus; you will search the records of his life in vain for a single confession of sin. If he were a mere man, then it was a defect, bringing him far down beneath the level of the prophets, proving him destitute of one of the chief marks of religious genius. But, if the reason why he never confessed sin was because he had no sin to confess, then he cannot have been a mere link in the ordinary chain of humanity, for all the other children of Adam have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

IV. *His Future.*—Mere men serve their generation and then die and are buried; they may have a posthumous existence in their descendants and in the continued influence of their works, but, as persons, they have no more share in all that is done beneath the circuit of the sun.

Jesus predicted about himself that after three days he would rise again, that in this resurrection form he would live for evermore, and that, at the end of this world's history, he would return to the earth again to be the judge of quick and dead.

After his resurrection he met with his followers in Galilee, assembled by his orders, and said to them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." What a claim—to be possessed of all power in heaven and on earth: who will take it upon him to measure how much it means? And, when he says, "Lo, I am with you always," is it not a claim to ubiquity? Long before he had made the latter claim, when he said, "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And on another occasion, speaking to those who should have to confess him before principalities and powers, he said: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist."

The descriptions of his second coming are painted in the most gorgeous colors: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with *his* angels." He is clothed with the glory of God, and the angels are called his angels. These are the highest of created beings, but he is their Lord.

The immediate purpose of his coming is to judge the world. He is the Judge of all, who pronounces the sentence of doom or of felicity: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left." *We* do not know one another; the greatest and wisest man alive is well aware that in his humblest fellow-

man, and even in the heart of a little child, there are depths and secrets which he cannot fathom. But Christ, according to his own testimony, is to disclose the history of every human being, and to assign to every one his everlasting station and degree, according to the exact appreciation of all he has ever done.

What shall we say to these things? Is this the description of a mere man?

Many now hearing me must at one time or other have felt the charm of a Christ who is purely human but not divine. Our literature abounds at present with such pictures, and some of them are very fascinating. The peasant of Nazareth in the carpenter's workshop; the lover of the poor and oppressed, who went about continually doing good; the pure and fearless reformer, who blasted with the lightning of his eloquence the Pharisee and the priest; the martyr, who died for the truth, and lies buried beneath the Syrian blue,—this picture is being sketched by clever *littérateurs;* it is impossible not to enjoy it; and you ask, Why does this win me more than the Christ I hear of in church? The latter perplexes me with mystery; but this is simple, human, lovable.

It is not, I think, difficult to explain this. If you happen to know music, and have ever endeavored to grasp an oratorio of Handel or Haydn, I am sure you can remember in it a few airs and choruses, which, if separated from the whole and executed by themselves, would produce far more immediate pleasure than the whole elaborate composition. Indeed, there are audiences which could not tolerate the oratorio as a whole, but would be delighted with its selected beauties. Yet, though these lovely morsels are enchanting, they are not Handel.

Or, do you know literature? If you know your Browning, you must be aware how charming it is, after struggling through his more difficult pages, to light on a lyric here and there which is perfectly easy reading. Selections of these find their way even into school books, and many readers can enjoy selections from this great author who recoil from his longer and more difficult works. But, though these elegant extracts are delightful they are not Browning.

In the same way these pictures of a merely human Christ are true as far as they go; they are the simpler traits selected from that great character and life; they are easy to comprehend, and they touch the feelings; but they are not Christ.

He is, you say, the ideal man—the model of modesty, wisdom and truth. But I have told you some of the things which he said about himself, and, with all reverence. I must affirm that, if he were not more than a good man, he was much less, for these statements were in that case neither wise, nor modest, nor true. If he were a weak and fallible man, he ought to have confessed his own sins, and he was a blasphemer when he spoke of giving his life a ransom for many. When he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," and promised to be with his people always, even to the end of the world, he was not a wise man, but the victim of a madman's delusions. When he, a finite creature, spoke of himself as seated on God's throne and judging the assembled world, he was no model of goodness and modesty, but a man rendered insane with pride, who was presuming to pluck the scepter from the hands of the Eternal. If he who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," had not the peace and joy of salvation to give to those who come to hide their guilty heads in his bosom, then he was cruelly deceiving us all.

In conclusion, let me say that this is no theoretical question. The reason why we contend for the divine glory of Christ is not because we are bound to uphold a metaphysical dogma, to which the church has committed herself; but it is because we believe that every human soul needs that which only a Divine Christ can give. We call him the Savior of the world. Have you considered what that means? It means one who knows every human soul to the bottom, and can meet all its needs in the most desperate hours; is means one on whom the guilty soul can rest all its

weight for time and eternity; it means one who, in the moment of dissolution, can receive the soul as it passes out of this life, and unlock all gates for its entrance into eternal blessedness.

I ask you is it rational, is it even moral, to commit all this to the hands of one who is no more than a man? We have that to commit to the Savior which no one has the right to accept, unless he possesses the infinite wisdom of God and wields the power of God.—Preached at the opening of Westminster Church, Toronto.

WHY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

HENRY J. VAN DYKE, D.D.

Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come . . I said, therefore, unto you that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.—John viii:21, 24.

How do we account for the fact that the future everlasting punishment of those who die impenitent and unforgiven, has been firmly held and strenuously defended by the great majority of Christians in every age? The doctrine is confessedly awful and repulsive. It has been assailed by every weapon of ridicule, of denunciation and of argument. It has been stigmatized as unreasonable, cruel and dishonoring to God. They who teach it have been held up to public scorn as "narrow-minded bigots," "heartless theologians," "Pharasaic dogmatists." Christianity itself has often been rejected because of it. And yet after eighteen centuries of investigation, discussion and controversy, this confessedly offensive and horrible doctrine enters as an essential element into the creed of the whole Christian Church, of the Greek, of the Latin, and of all the great historical Protestant bodies. It underlies and pervades, in some form, the religious experience, the hymnology and the liturgies of the great mass of Christians. Its opponents among professing Christians belong exclusively to one of two classes—those who refuse to adopt any definite statements of religious belief, or those who are confessedly out of sympathy with the denominations to which they belong. The doctrine of future punishment is one of the points in regard to which there is no characteristic difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. As it prevailed in the church before the rise of the Romish hierarchy, so also it was not brought into question when the Reformation struck off the chains of priestly power, and led men in the free exercise of the right of private judgment to the study of the Scriptures. While all the Lutheran and Reformed creeds reject the comparatively modern dogma of purgatory, they reaffirm the ancient faith of the Church in future everlasting punishment. The popular notion that this doctrine has some peculiar connection with the Presbyterian Church, or at least with what is called the Calvinistic system, is utterly groundless. Two facts will demonstrate the truth of this remark. The Protestant Episcopal Church in this country and in England, while they reject our Presbyterian polity, declare their faith in this doctrine in unequivocal terms, every time they repeat

the venerable Litany, which contains this solemn petition, "From wrath and everlasting damnation, good Lord deliver us." Do they play the hypocrite before God when they thus pray to him? Certainly not. Does Canon Farrar use the Litany? We presume he does. On the other hand, the whole Methodist denomination, while they reject what are called Calvinistic doctrines, preach future punishment with their characteristic zeal.

Now, how do we account for this tenacity of belief in a doctrine so unpopular and so repulsive to the human heart? Shall we accept the popular explanation, and believe that the great body of theologians and Christian people in all ages have been so blinded and hardened by hatred towards their fellow-men that the thought of the perdition of others enhances the anticipation of their own blessedness? Does the strength of this doctrine consist in the *delight* it affords those who hold it? We blush for those who make it when we repeat the suggestion that the great body of the fathers and of the reformers, the overwhelming majority of all who have ever preached the gospel since the days of the apostles—including the authors of the sweetest melodies that have ever embodied Christian love in songs, such as, "Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts;" "Rock of ages cleft for me;" "Jesus, lover of my soul;" "There is a fountain filled with blood;"—that all these were monsters of cruelty, to whose hearts the thought of another's suffering brought exquisite pleasure. If this were true, then, indeed, would Christianity be a failure, and Nero, when he sought to stamp it out of the world, would be a model of virtue compared with its most honored saints. But let us have done with such senseless reviling; it is neither philosophic, nor charitable, nor truthful. As a joke, it is ghastly; as an argument, beneath contempt. They who believe the doctrine of future everlasting punishment are quite as loving in their spirit as they who reject it. The weakest of all ways to assail a doctrine is to impeach the motives and traduce the character of those who hold it. It is no comfort to us to think with Paul, that, after having preached to others, we ourselves "may be a castaway," or that any to whom we have preached may "fail of the grace of God."

Why then do we not all agree to reject the doctrine of future punishment and abolish it forever from our creed? There are two obstacles in the way, two insurmountable facts, which account for the prevalence of the doctrine, and make it just as impossible to eliminate it from Christian belief as it is to vote pain out of the world, or to abolish poverty and sickness by acts of Congress.

In the first place the doctrine of future and everlasting punishment is in accordance with the suggestions of the human conscience, and with the constitution and course of nature which all Christians call divine Providence. Forebodings of wrath to come are as instinctive and as universal among men as a belief in God and in the immortality of the soul. It is a doctrine of natural as well as of revealed religion, and it is abundantly confirmed by the analogies between the two. It is not peculiar to the Christian system; it lies at the basis of all religion.

If men suffer—and suffer remedilessly for sin in this life, under the government of a merciful and holy God, no satisfactory reason can be assigned why they may not so suffer in another state of existence, and in the face of existing facts, no speculation of uninspired men can argue out of the human soul those forebodings of wrath to come which the gospel so far from removing, has only confirmed in the great majority of those who accept it. Every argument against these natural forebodings founded upon an appeal to the divine attributes, is equally good against the very existence of the divine government over this world; and if carried out to its logical conclusion must lead to the denial of the being of God. It is very easy to beg the question in dispute by passionate appeals to God's justice and benevolence. The question to be decided is, What in God's judgment, who alone is competent to decide, will be the just doom for incorrigible sinners? And the only answer to that question, aside from Scripture, is

found in what he does in this world, and what the accusing conscience forebodes that he will do in the next. Abraham once asked, in a very different spirit from those who quote his words, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the answer was not what the patriarch pleaded for, but the storm of fire and brimstone that blotted out the doomed cities of the plain. And this appeal to natural justice as against the everlasting punishment of the wicked is still more grossly inconsistent with the very idea of such a remedial system as the gospel. "If it be inconsistent with divine justice that men should perish for their sins, then redemption is not a matter of grace or undeserved mercy. Deliverance from an unjust penalty is a matter of justice. Nothing, however, is plainer from the teaching of Scripture, and nothing is more universally and joyfully acknowledged by all Christians than that the whole plan of redemption —the mission, the incarnation and the death of the Son of God for the salvation of sinners—is a wonderful exhibition of the love of God which passes knowledge. But if justice demand that all men shall be saved, then salvation is a matter of justice; and all the songs of gratitude and praise from the redeemed, whether in heaven or on earth, ought at once to cease."—*Hodge.*

And you will readily see that the question of justice is not in anywise affected by the *number* of the lost. Nor is the appeal to divine benevolence more logical or conclusive. As the question of numbers is especially irrelevant when applied to the justice, so the question of time or duration is irrelevant as regards benevolence. If God's benevolence necessitates the ultimate and complete happiness of all, that necessity is just as binding now as it ever will be; for the whole argument is based upon the assumption that God's benevolence, being infinite, must have an infinite expression—in other words, that he must make all men as happy as they can be. But we know that all men are not happy here; nay, we know that no man is as happy as he is capable of being. If it be answered that God cannot make all men perfectly blessed here consistently with his own perfections and with the interests of the universe, and with the very nature of the human soul, that nullifies the whole argument; for who beside God himself is competent to say that the same conditions may not limit the exercise of infinite benevolence in a future state? So that the consideration of the moral attributes of God as they are illustrated in his providence over this world, instead of overturning the doctrine of future punishment, is, in fact, one strong reason why it has always been believed.

The second reason why the doctrine of future punishment has been so universally and tenaciously held is found in the teaching of Scripture, and especially in the recorded instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is very remarkable that all the strongest expressions in which the common belief in future punishment is embodied, or by which it is illustrated—all the expressions which are most frequently ridiculed and reviled by unbelievers—fell originally from the lips of Christ himself. Whatever "the worm that dieth not" and "the fire that is not quenched" may signify—whatever is meant by being "bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth"—these and many similar expressions descriptive of the destiny of men after death are not the inventions of theologians, but the two-edged words of him who spoke as never man spake. It was he who related the story of a certain rich man who lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and begged in vain for a drop of water to cool his tongue. Five times in one discourse, when exhorting us to self-denial which he declares to be necessary to salvation, he enforces his precepts by warning us that we are in danger of being cast into hell fire, into the fire that is not quenched, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. Does any one say this is horrible? So we think it is. But it was the loving and compassionate Savior who said it.

And now, when men rail at his ministers as cruel and malignant, and delighting

in human suffering, because they simply repeat his words, we repel the accusation, not as against ourselves, but as well suited to dishonor and vilify the character of Jesus Christ. We do not impute to them any such purpose. But when they denounce Augustine, and Calvin, and the Reformers, and the Puritan fathers for receiving and repeating these words of Christ, we feel sure that their censures, in the apprehension of impenitent and unbelieving men, pass over from the servants at whom they are aimed and wound the Master in the house of his friend.

Nor can the force of this observation be evaded by the assertion that it is not the words of Christ against which these railing accusations are brought, but only the interpretation which theologians have put upon them. For it is further remarkable that the doctrine of future punishment, as held and taught by the Christian Church in all ages, does not and never has consisted in the *interpretation* of these expressions of the Savior. Even the Roman Catholic Church has never undertaken, by the decree of any council, to decide whether the fire unquenchable is to be literally or figuratively understood. And there is not a Protestant creed in Christendom which insists upon a material hell, or upon a literal acceptation of the Savior's words descriptive of future punishment. All the Church and its creeds have ever insisted upon is that the words of Jesus Christ are *true,* and were *truthfully uttered;* that they represent not a fiction, but a reality; and that he uttered them to give a faithful warning to all generations of men concerning a real danger to which they are exposed. Doubtless there has been a vast deal of wild speculation among theologians and preachers of every name. But all this has nothing to do with the essence of Christian faith. No formulated creed, and, so far as we know, no theologian of acknowledged repute, has ever undertaken to decide whether the words of Christ about that Gehenna fire, which is *not* quenched, are to be received literally, or only as the symbols of a mere profound spiritual reality. The absolute and everlasting truth of his teaching on this subject is not involved in this question of interpretation; nor would that truth be a whit less terrible to any thoughtful mind if we knew for a certainty that the quenchless flame is nothing more than the burning of perpetual remorse in the chambers of the lost soul itself. Among those who have insisted most earnestly upon this interpretation are to be found some of the ablest and most orthodox expounders of both Roman Catholic and Protestant theology.

Further than this, it is remarkable that in the judgment of the Christian Church, as expressed in its creeds and in the preaching of its ablest ministers, the doctrine of future punishment has never been based exclusively upon those peculiar expressions of the Savior. It does not rest upon any set of words or phrases, nor upon a few isolated texts, but upon the broad declarations, and especially upon the underlying assumptions, of the whole Scripture. And because this doctrine is thus interwoven with the whole gospel it is so tenaciously held by Christians. This will account for what may be regarded as the intemperate zeal with which some have defended it. When men seem to advocate and defend future punishment as though their happiness depended upon the belief that others must perish, if you could look into their hearts you would see that it is the *integrity of their Savior* and the truth of the sweet promises of the gospel that they are vindicating. If he is not to be believed when he threatens everlasting punishment, neither is he trustworthy when he promises everlasting life, for the two things are spoken of in the same sentence, and their duration is described by the same word; as, for example, in the description of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. And it is not by single words or sentences, but by the whole drift and tone of his teaching, that the doctrine is fastened upon the experimental belief of the soul. Suppose we admit that the word *Hell* is never used in the New Testament in connection with the idea of punishment, that it means only and always the general state of the dead as distinguished from the living, and that there is no other single

word which definitely describes either a state or a place of future punishment; suppose we admit, also, that the word *damnation* ought to be translated *condemnation* always, as it is sometimes, and that the latter word has a meaning entirely different from the former; suppose, further, we concede that the word *aionios* does not mean everlasting; that there is no word in the Greek language to express the idea of endless duration; that the idea was unknown to the human mind in the days of Christ, and, consequently, that there is nothing in the Bible to assure us that heaven is everlasting, or that Jehovah is the Eternal God—suppose, I say, we concede all these monstrous assumptions, which have lately been put forth so dogmatically and with such an ostentation of profound scholarship; and to crown all these assumptions with one still more monstrous, let us suppose that the proposed new translation of the Bible will fully indorse all these new interpretations, and abolish the three obnoxious words, *hell, damnation* and *everlasting,* from the holy Scriptures: what then? Have you eliminated the doctrine of everlasting future punishment from the Bible, and especially from the teaching of Jesus Christ? Why, no! What will you do, for example, with the Savior's great commission to his disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

Now substitute the word "condemned" for "damned"; nay, to make the point still clearer, strike out the whole clause in which it stands, and let the only sanction to the great commission be, "he that believeth shall be saved." Does that mean he that believeth *not* shall be saved? Did the Savior know at the time he gave this great commission that ultimately it will make little difference to men whether they hear and believe the gospel or not? How, then, can we receive Jesus Christ as an infallible, or even as a truthful, teacher? It must be obvious to every candid mind that what is assumed in that commission is an essential part of his teaching. And the same course of observation applies to all his exceeding great and precious promises and invitations. When he says, "Come unto me, ye weary and heavy laden; take my yoke on you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls," does he mean that they who *do not come to him* shall find rest the same as they who do? When he stands and weeps over Jerusalem and laments that they would not be gathered to him, and declares that now the day of their merciful visitation is past, does he see beyond the few days of bloody conflict, in which Jerusalem will be destroyed and her children slaughtered in her streets, a heaven of perpetual joy and felicity into which they will all be gathered home? When he signifies to Peter by what death he shall glorify God, he sheds no tears and utters no lamentations. And can we believe that the anticipation of the crucifixion of one of his own apostles, excited less emotion in the Savior's soul than the prophetic vision of similar sufferings on the part of his enemies? Surely the desolation of their house, and the hiding of the things which belonged to their peace, and the passing away of the day in which these things could be known, are associated in his mind with something more than the Roman sword or the Roman cross. Those tears over apostate Jerusalem are more terrible in their significance than his warnings about the undying worm and the quenchless fire.

But let us turn from these general considerations of the underlying assumptions of Christ's teaching to the most specific declarations of our text. As a prophet, the Savior is looking into the future and declaring that which shall be hereafter. He says nothing here directly of hell, of condemnation, or of everlasting punishment; but in language most profound and comprehensive, "Ye shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come." The two propositions are parallel and co-extensive. They stand in the relation of cause and effect.

To die in one's sins is to die unforgiven. If forgiveness were a mere sovereign and arbitrary act of divine mercy, performed by God without regard to the sinner's moral state or to the claims of his own holy law, the thought of dying unforgiven

would not be so dreadful. But all Christians agree that forgiveness is not a mere arbitrary exercise of mercy, which can be put forth at any time and without regard to the sinner's attitude toward God. It is an act of justice no less than of mercy. It is based on the satisfaction Christ rendered to the divine law in behalf of them that believe. It is inseparably connected with faith. The Savior expounds the text with the further declaration, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." And to die in sin is to die under the condemnation of the divine law.

Moreover, to die in sin is to die with its uncleanness and its bitter recollection clinging to the soul. The words which Christ puts into the mouth of Abraham in the conversation with the rich man, "lifting up his eyes in torment," strike the key-note of all weeping and wailing. "Son, remember!" That remembrance with its bitter remorse may constitute in the next world, as it so often does in this, the chief ingredient in the misery of sin. But whatever may be the form or mode of future punishment, it is always based upon and accurately proportioned to the ill-desert of human sin. And now I declare to you that the uniform belief not only of the great teachers, Augustine and Calvin, but of all who hold the doctrine of future punishment—whether Catholic or Protestant, whether Calvinistic or Arminian—is this: that men are punished in the future world *simply and solely for their personal ill-desert,* or, as the text says, because *they die in their sins.* What will be the consequence of thus dying in sin? Manifestly, unforgiven sin in its condemnation and pollution will adhere to the soul as long as the soul exists, unless there is in the future world some process more effectual for its removal than any to which it has been subjected in this life. Is there such a future redemption? In other words, is there any foundation for the theory of the restoration of the wicked? This theory rests upon one of two hypotheses. The first is, that punishment itself will bring the sinner to repentance and reformation; that this is the only end for which it can be justly inflicted, and that when this end is accomplished the punishment will necessarily cease. The objections to this are obvious and insurmountable. (1) It is contrary to all human experience. When was a child made good merely by whipping, or a prisoner reformed simply by bonds and imprisonment? (2) It is entirely without scripture foundation. Where is there a single text to support it? (3) It involves the manifest absurdity that punishment is no longer deserved, and can no longer be inflicted when the reformation of the sinner becomes hopeless; so that, in order to escape from divine judgment, a man has only to make himself as bad as he can be. (4) And, above all, it dishonors the method of salvation revealed in the gospel. If divine punishment shall prove more effectual than divine love—what then becomes of the apostle's assertion that the Gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation"? The second hypothesis upon which the theory of restoration rests is in itself far less objectionable; it supposes that the gospel will be preached in the next world to those who have not heard it, or who, having heard, have rejected it in this; and it is assumed that under their changed circumstances, all who have died in their sins will accept the new offer of salvation through faith in Christ. If this could be shown to be true, there is no human heart, certainly no Christian heart, which would not embrace it with joy unspeakable. Our objection to the hypothesis is that it is a *mere* hypothesis. Certainly our Lord Jesus Christ never taught any such doctrine; nor is there in his recorded teaching a single sentence from which any one has ever pretended to derive the confirmation of it.

This admitted silence of the Savior is sufficient to condemn the whole theory; for it compels the advocates of such human speculation to assume a superiority either of wisdom or of kindness to the Son of God. *He* never taught such a doctrine; but they vindicate the character and government of God by supplementing his defective teaching with a theory of their own. But the silence of the Savior is not all. He used words and uttered warnings and drew pictures utterly inconsistent with the supposition that

he believed there would be another probation in the world to come; and that, too, under circumstances where, if he had entertained any such views, common honesty and human kindness would have compelled him to avow them. For example, take his answer to the question which agitated men's minds in his day just as it does now—the question, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" (Luke xiii: 23.) Here was a grand opportunity for the full exposition of the truth—for the comfort of anxious inquirers in all time to come. How did he answer? His answer is in these solemn and plain words: "*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, *will seek* to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me all *ye* workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out." This answer must be taken in its connection and in its completeness. It will not do to break it into fragments and select what suits our theory. Here is no intimation that the gospel will be preached over again in the next world in order to persuade those who have rejected it here to accept it there. True, Jesus did not consent to gratify human curiosity in regard to the numbers of the saved or of the lost. But he did propose then, as always, to teach all who came to him whatever is necessary for their salvation and their comfort. But he declared that after the probation of the present day of salvation is ended *they who seek to enter in shall not be able.* Why? Because the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door. "The figure is the usual one of a feast, at which the householder entertains the members of his family. These being assembled, he rises and shuts the door, and none are afterward admitted."—*Alford.* Nor is this prophecy of the future lightened or altered in any wise by those parables in which the same figure of a feast is employed to represent the provisions, the purposes and the final results of the gospel in its broadest applications. One of them concludes with the unqualified declaration, "I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden (and had refused) shall taste of my supper." In another, a man who had come in without the wedding garment is "bound hand and foot and taken away and cast into outer darkness." Now, we ask again, could the Savior have used such language if the gospel is to be preached over again in the next world to those who have rejected it in this?

Or take the picture of eternity which he painted in such lurid colors in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. What did he mean by the statement which he puts in Abraham's lips, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence"? Is such language consistent with the supposition that he knew all the while there would be a going down of gospel messages and invitations from heaven to those who die in their sins—a restoration of the lost to all the opportunities and joys of salvation?

Or take the plain words of our text: *"Whither I go ye cannot come."* We know whither he has gone. And before he goes he says to the unbelievers around him, and to all who shall die in their sins, *"thither ye cannot come."* Did he mean only that they could not come *for the present?* Why then did he not say so? It would have been so easy, and so honest, and so kind to tell the whole truth in the premises. He did say to one of his disciples, "Whether I go thou canst not follow me *now,* but thou shalt follow me *afterwards."* But to those who shall die in their sins he says emphatically and without any qualification, *"Whither I go ye cannot come."*

If others turn away from him because of these hard doctrines, we will only come

nearer and say more lovingly, "Lord, to whom can we go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life." God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; it was condemned already. The foreboding of wrath to come which he formulated into the doctrine of future punishment is not the gospel; it is only the dark background of natural religion on which the gospel is projected; and we cling to it, not only because it is the dictate of the human conscience and the common sense of mankind, but because he who is the light of the world has inseparably connected it with the sweetest promises of his grace and glory.

All orthodox preachers in Europe and America, and all their predecessors from the days of Augustine and of Paul, agree "that the vast majority of the lost will be found." In fact, all orthodox preachers not only *hope*, but are firmly persuaded, that "where sin abounds grace will much more abound," and that the great majority of mankind will be saved. The salvation of all who die in infancy has, from the beginning, kept the majority on the side of Christ and heaven: and that majority will be unspeakably increased in the days of millennial glory. Why, even Jonathan Edwards, whose discourses contain the most terrific, and we are willing to add the most unwarrantable, descriptions of future punishment, insists that the finally lost will bear no larger proportion to the saved than the inmates of a prison to the population of an empire. He represents the fewness of their numbers one element of their punishment. But now, what have we to do with the numbering of the lost or the saved? We are told that the saved will be "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindred and people and tongues." Let us see to it that we and all we can influence are among that blessed multitude. Our business is to strive that we may enter in. Let us not die in our sins, through want of faith in Jesus Christ, and so be excluded from the place and the state whither he has gone. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in him* might not perish, but have everlasting life."—Preached in Clinton St. Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, 1878.

LAYING ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT.

ROBERT E. SPEER.

On reading over again the Epistle to the Hebrews, I was struck with the appropriateness of the letter to men who have gathered together to re-examine their spiritual ideals of character and of service and to raise their lives, if possible, a little nearer to their ideals. If any part of the Bible makes an appeal to men to lift their lives to levels more Christ-like, more strongly than any other, it is this letter to which I have referred. It is setting forth from the beginning the claims of superior things over inferior, and it would be an interesting study for any man to go through it and observe its succession of appeals to men to move from lower to higher, and from higher on to what is higher still.

The one particular appeal that has been in my heart to speak about is the one laying upon our consciences the obligation to clean our lives of every unholy and weakening thing, and to draw as near as we can to the likeness of Christ, that we may acquire as much as we can of that sacred influence. I am thinking particularly of the beginning of the twelfth chapter of the epistle, where, after a long list of the heroes and heroines of sacrifice and faith, the writer of this Epistle, whoever he may have been, appeals to the Christians to whom it is addressed, that since they are compassed about with all this cloud of witnesses, they should lay off every weight and the sin that clings so closely to them, and run the race that is set before them, with their eyes fixed upon the Savior, who stands behind the goal awaiting the runners as they come in.

Very often I go back to ask myself, do I think of my life as a race? Have I that conception of it, that feeling of earnestness about it, which would entitle me to speak of it as a race? And have I cleaned out of my life, stripped off from myself as I run, every hindering and encumbering thing which would impede me as I run my race to the Savior behind the goal? We may be sure that, whether we ask these questions of ourselves or not, other people are asking them about us all the time. They think they ought to see some distinction between us, the men who are running, and the spectators. You have no difficulty in distinguishing between the runners on the track and the lookers-on; you have no difficulty in distinguishing between the team and the spectators in any athletic contest; the men show out by what they have laid aside. The world looks on and expects to see us, as men who are running a race, strip off everything that might hinder us. They expect to see us, to put it in moral terms, better men than they are. We are constantly asked whether ministers should be better men than others. No, not better than others ought to be; but they should be better men than others are. It is a perfectly just contention that we who are supposed to be leaders in Christ's church should show forth that we are better men. And woe to that Christian leader who does not show forth in his life that he is stripped, as for a race, of every weight, that he is keyed up in his conception of what he is here to do, as a runner who, stripped of every impediment, runs away with his eyes upon his goal.

The appeal is not only to lay aside every sin, but the weights also that hinder us.

There are numerous things that hinder us which cannot be denounced as sins. I think the line is not so clearly drawn as we sometimes draw it, but it is clear enough, from the language here, that everything hindering is intended to be radically handled. Everything that will clog a man's activity, everything that will impede him in the higher life, everything that may shear him of his power, however legal it may be, however moral it may be, is nevertheless resolutely to be stripped from a man's life and from himself.

There is something about the weights with which we load ourselves that makes them more perilous than sins. A man knows generally what sin is, he goes into it with open eyes. But a man may bear weights without knowing he is bearing them at all. Maybe he was conscious of the weight when he took it on, maybe it hindered him a little bit then and he felt it, but he soon became accustomed to it, and he runs now fettered and shackled without knowing that he is not free. I am not so much afraid of the sins that I see; what I am afraid of is my color-blindness, that I may not be able to see things that a keener and more sensitive vision would discern, that I may be bearing burdens to which I have accustomed myself so that I do not know that they are hindering me in my life.

Any man with a clearer vision than I will discern in myself some weight. There is not a man in this room this evening who is not hindered by some weight. And the anguish of it is that we do not know we are hindered, and no one else will disclose it to us. If we could only lay our lives down, open to the eyes of Christ, every man would discover to his shame that he was bearing burdens of which he was not aware. Is it a hard thing for him to give up—this indulgence, this particular personal pleasure? Then it is a weight that hinders him. A friend who is a minister in one of our largest cities, told me how he had been led to give up an indulgence of his. He had never realized that he had been a slave to it until one day the thought came to him, "Don't you think you would be a better man if you gave it up?" He said, "I will try it and see," and then he realized how shackled he had been, how hard it was to tear off those chains; and when he got them torn off, he walked out into a life and liberty of whose existence he had not known so long as he had walked in the old serfdom.

And there are subtler hindrances than these that might be described as weights and impediments in our character. There is that self-consciousness that fills up our lives when our minds are concerned with thoughts of ourselves rather than of Christ, or about ourselves as serving Christ rather than Christ as served by us. I know men who can make themselves cry thinking of the sacrifices they might one day make for Christ, but they never cry about the sacrifices Christ has made for them. A self-consciousness that poisons the inner life in that way inevitably creeps out to poison a man's works, so that when he gets up to preach the gospel it is his own face that looks at him instead of the face of Christ. There is a self-consciousness which takes the form of pride of strength—a man finding out what in him is strong, and becoming vain of that. There is a self-consciousness taking the form of pride of service, so that when a man does service he will sit down and feel gratification at what he has done and the success with which he has done it. There is a self-consciousness that takes the form of pride in overcoming. As Mazzini says, "The morrow of victory is more perilous than its eve." I think that is exemplified in the prayers of our Master after the great events of his life. Any man, before the great events of his life, is keyed up, aware of the danger of failure, and throwing himself at the crisis with all his powers. But every man knows, who studies his own life, that those are the very times when a man can stand alone, if he ever can stand alone. It is after the battle is over, after the victory has been successfully achieved, when we sit down in the moment of victory, that we fall—that our character suffers collapse and the evil one finds his access deepest into our souls.

There is a form of self-consciousness that constantly attacks every man engaged in organized Christian work—the poison that arises out of the pride of precedence; men quarrel over whether they have the place to which they think they are entitled. There is nothing which is more un-Christlike, nothing which produces friction and waste in the Christian church more than this thing. Last evening I saw hanging upon the wall of my stenographer's room a little pasteboard card on which she had printed these rules of Archbishop Benson, "First, not to call attention to crowded work of petty fatigue or trivial experience; second, to heal wounds which in times past my cruel and careless hands have made; third, to seek no favor, no compassion; to deserve, not ask for tenderness; fourth, not to feel any uneasiness when my advice or opinion is not asked, or is set aside."

What a transformation would pass over Christian service if every man could strip off the weights that hinder him!

Then, at the other extreme, is self-depreciation, living in the despair which arises out of that exalting of ourselves to the first place or to the pre-eminence which belongs to Christ alone. Thus that poison of self-consciousness stains and poisons us on this side, as on the other. Then there is the spirit of torpor that creeps into our lives, as we see in our use of old, well-worn phrases in prayer, as we fall back upon old, effete phrases when we try to preach the gospel, seeking the easy thing, the repetition of some old or borrowed message rather than the spiritual anguish a man must pass through to become the bearer of a message sent through him. And is there any one who is not hindered by the spirit of lifelessness in service, speaking the words when there is no corresponding yearning beneath? I was speaking in a military school in the South some years ago, and after the meeting was over, the head of the school, who had been a major in the Confederate army, came up to me to speak with me about the meeting, and I said, "Yes, Major, but it is hard for a man to speak all he feels." He said, "Mr. Speer, is that really the difficulty? Don't you think it is harder for a man to feel all he says?" We often speak the words of invitation, but there is no passion of the soul that goes with them.

Those are only a few of the weights that hinder us. And alas, there are not only weights resting on us; would to God they were weights alone! With a little of the clearer vision of Christ, we might discover them, and, by his grace, tear them from our lives. But worse things hinder men, even Christian men. Lay aside the weights, to be sure, but also the sins. I read last summer in the *British Student* a very suggestive article called "The Perils of the Forgiven Life," and the last peril was the peril of grievous moral fall. Let no man think he is so sacred that he does not walk on the edge of the possibility of great moral fall.

And there are other sins that confront us, not sins of conduct alone, but sins of temper also. One is tempted to think at times that spiritual workers, more than any others, are exposed to sins of irascibility. Any of us who will stop to scrutinize his own life will realize how many sins of temper there are. I think the thing I have to fight hardest myself is just this temptation to impatience. One sees things clearly oneself, and cannot brook hesitation or opposition in others; one perceives what he believes to be the truth so easily oneself, and cannot understand why others cannot see it as easily and respond to it. There are no sins to which we are so prone as sins like these, and they simply rob men of their spiritual power, as they destroy in men their likeness to Christ.

And it is not the sins that we speak of generally and as public weaknesses, but it is the sin that clings closest to a man, that does most easily beset him. I think I know mine; I suspect you know yours. That is the thing to be taken hold of and rooted remorselessly out of your life. The weights and the sins also, are to be laid aside

Notice how sweeping—"laying aside every weight." I believe one great fault of the preaching of our day is its lack of moral rigidity, its readiness to make compromises, and to deal with the highest and firmest standards of life in a spirit of compromise. What young men everywhere want is a gospel that makes an appeal for moral character as hard as granite, and will not abate one jot or one tittle of its moral standard. You cannot win the men we want by exalting a standard of life that lets in all sorts of compromises. What men respond to is the thing that men responded to in Jesus' day—the hard, firm, religious teaching of unqualified integrity and righteousness.

"Laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us." You know, Chinese Gordon cut off his newspapers. He wrote to his sister that he found that the newspapers were simply poisoning his spiritual life, and he was going to cut away from all of them. Whatever a man finds is robbing him of spiritual power, that thing he must hurl out of his life.

I went this week to a retreat in one of our presbyteries, and there was just this question raised of cleaning out a man's life. One of the last men to speak was one of the strongest men in the presbytery, and he said, with his chin quivering, "Brethren, I am going home from here to have a house cleaning. I am going to take every picture from my study walls except two, one is Hoffman's head of Jesus, and the other is a picture of a foot-ball game in my student days; I am going to leave them there—one to show me the life of training, and other the man I want to be. And I am going to put under them just two words, 'Running' and 'Stripped.'" Can you and I say that of our lives—running and stripped?

We all know it is no short spurt, quickly done and over. That is not what is meant by tearing off an impediment and running out into the free life. I have never been able to understand how men can speak of the Christian life as an easy thing. I have never found it easy myself, and I never knew any Christian man whom I felt to be in the power and freedom of the life, who was trying to fight out his life as it ought to be fought, who found it a simple and easy thing. You remember how it is put by Frederick Myers, that you cannot do it in a minute, in the twinkling of an eye; that though you begin it in the morning, it will last until evening; and many a time the noonday and the evening of your life will be stained with tears and remorse at the shirkings, the surrenders and the cowardly retreats. Through all of this we shall doubtless have to pass, but we will pass through it if our eyes are on him who stands behind the goal.

I like to go back to those two great points in the appeal which seemed in the mind of the writer of it to furnish the motive power that is required to accomplish what is appealed for. "Wherefore," he says, "seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." I take that literally myself, just as I take literally the words used by our Lord that the angels of the little children have a privileged place and immediate access to God, and do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven—just so, around about us all the time are those who have run this race before us, watching us. Many of you have been in college contests, and remember how you came out on the field and saw the thousands of spectators. You became aware of great possibilities which you never dreamed that you possessed before. "Wherefore," you say, "seeing that I am compassed about by this innumerable company, my father, my mother, and all back of them, and the eyes of greater than these fixed upon me in the daylight and the dark"—think you, such a man would refrain from doing what he can do, would fail to do all he could if he was aware every hour of those eyes upon him? Whatever weight we have today, whatever sin clings closest to us, all of those eyes behold. Let us let it go.

And then there is that other motive that he cites, "Looking unto Jesus, the author

and finisher of our faith." It is the old figure of the Isthmian Games, the judge, the rewarder, sitting behind the goal, awaiting the runners as they come in. Behind the goal sits the Savior, watching. I do not care to go on with the rest of the metaphor in our modern terms, though that is what the writer of the epistle would do; he would picture the runner crossing the goal a victor, and falling exhausted into the arms of Christ.

In the first chapter of his book, *The Christ of History and Experience,* Dr. Forrest points out that one unique thing in the consciousness of Jesus was his being unpolluted by any past defect, tarnish or stain. We cannot say that of any of us. I look upon everything that comes my way with a defective standard of measurement. I need to see Jesus Christ with absolute clearness of vision, because he alone is the one perfect standard of measurement of what I ought to be and what I ought to do. And not for that only do I need him. I think that every year my theology becomes more and more evangelical, because of the necessities of experience. I know that in myself no impulse, no high moral resolution and will, can make me a better man. I know in myself that I only become a better man as the Lord himself within me does his work, accomplishing for me what I myself have tried and failed to accomplish for myself. Only by looking away at him and feeling him in us shall we be able to lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and to run.

It would be a great thing if we could break past all of those memories, those little, half-conscious conventionalities, which, for the most part, determine our Christian experiences and vitalize and individualize our Christian work—it would be a great thing if we could break from these into the realities of life, and see, first of all, what things are the weights that hinder us, what thing is the sin that does so easily beset us, and then tear it away from us, and *run.* "Seeing that we also are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us," and let us run—oh! men, *let us* RUN.—From an address to the students of Union Theological Seminary.

MEN TO RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST.

R. S. STORRS, JR., D.D.

We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.—2 Cor. v:20.

To be reconciled to God!—it is necessarily the first and greatest want of all his intelligent and immortal creatures who are in any way alienated from him. It is, as human history testifies, the vague, but real and imperative longing of human nature itself, underlying all others, more permanent than they. All systems of heathenism, with their sacrifices and penances, their instituted priesthoods, their costly offerings, their destroying pilgrimages, their smoking piles and bloody immolations, are built on this desire: to be reconciled to God! By them human nature is sought to be elevated; by them the Divine Being is sought to be propitiated; till the creature and the Creator, respectively arising and descending from their positions, shall meet upon the plane of reconciliation. The same desire is indicated as well in the poetry of the world. The same good is recognized as the great good of man, by its noblest philosophy, its most searching and elevated moral instructions.

For it is a fact which we cannot fail to recognize and feel, as we investigate the condition of man, that he is not now in sympathy with God; that he does not now cooperate with him, or stand in a filial relation towards him. It is a fact to which conscience emphatically testifies. A sense of severance and remoteness from God, a vague impression of responsive repellency and condemnation on his part—this is at the bottom of all the unrest, the swayings back and forth of religious opinion, oscillating for ever between skepticism and superstition, which confront us in history.

Our relations to God should be more intimate than to any other being; as he is naturally nearer to us than any other, fulfilling offices for us the most constant and essential, as our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor. Our relations to him should be those of perfect mutual confidence, with an even unbounded love and gladness. A filial, adoring affection on our part, uttering itself in all forms of activity, and making every work a worship; a divine benignity and tenderness on his part, replying to our love—these should mark our relations to him. They should be relations of conscious spiritual intercourse indeed, and of the utmost assimilation and sympathy of spirit and thought. The possibility of this is conceivable by us, and the simple possibility is proof that we should realize it; as conscience and reason conspire to assure us.

But instead of this, our relations to God are, as we know, relations of distance, of alienation and coldness, of an utter want of affectionate sympathy and intelligent communion. We do not like to retain God in our thoughts.

God surrounds us, surveys us, upholds us, directs us, in his continual providential administration, at every part and instant of our being; is with us in our business, as well as in our rest; is with us through life, and is with us wherever the mystery of Death at last arrests and overshadows the soul. And yet we do not feel ourselves near to him, in moral correspondence, in the sympathy of purpose, the communion of thought, the sweet interchange of affection. And it would be a positive relief to us sometimes, while we remain in this our usual moral state, if either HE or WE were

annihilated! or if we could remove to some remote planet where his presence and government should cease to pursue us! If men had the power, in such awful moments of conscious antagonism, they would put the Deity out of existence, in order to be rid of this oppressive and constant sense of distance from him, and of mutual alienation.

This we know, as I said, each man for himself. And however we may be inclined to forget it, and to reason about the dignity of our nature, as if the mere constitution of our being were enough of itself to ally us with God, no reasoning and no rhetoric can hide from us the facts, that we do not stand towards him as we should do; that instead of being in sympathy with him, we are in a state of alienation and severance. No man, it seems to me, whether he acknowledges the Scriptures or not, can attentively survey his own inner life, can analyze his conduct to its principles and motives, without keenly feeling this. It is, indeed, the wail of the world; the ever re-appearing refrain of poetry; the under beat of the deepest philosophy; "the still, sad music of humanity."

It is, then, the instant suggestion of reason, it is the imperative mandate of prudence, that we should seek at once to be "reconciled" to God. It is death to be at war with him! It is the destruction of every hope; the utter overthrow of all our dearest and most cherished desires; the paralysis of the soul, for every good and every joy! For GOD is the Supreme One!

To sin against him, to be in a state of hostility toward God—is certain destruction to any of his creatures. If it is not annihilation, it is only because it is something more fearful than even annihilation!

Nor only because of these measureless perils attending the want of it, is it the greatest good of man to be reconciled to God; but, equally, because of the good to be realized, the unmatched and unspeakable spiritual good, to be gained through that! The same powers and prerogatives which make God so fearful and terrible as an enemy, make him equally supreme as a benefactor to his friends. Simply to love a being like God, so great and pure, and constant in his glory—it is of itself, to every intelligence, the highest good! as it is the one infinite evil and mischief to be in any way dissevered from him! To be in heart affiliated with God, to feel his strength, wisdom and grace flowing in upon us, and filling our souls as with rivers of peace—every mind must instinctively recognize that as the highest possible attainment of our nature.

Around this, too, all other great attainments and delights are naturally gathered, and through it they all are to be realized. The utmost assurance of security and safeness; the promise of a knowledge, a heavenly wisdom, which is as yet unimaginable by us; affiliation with all celestial beings; the perfection of purity; the keenest delight and ecstasy of soul; a joy which the centuries of heaven itself cannot outlast, and shall only accumulate;—*all that God can bestow,* whose resources are of course yet unknown to us; *all that man can receive,* whose soul in its deep and vast capacities hath not been fully sounded and measured by any experience; all this, prolonged through the cycles of the future, is the natural inheritance of him who hath God for his father and friend.

We cannot fully tell what shall be the nature or the greatness of his inheritance! Thanks to God that we cannot! We only know that it surpasses our thought. It is one of the noblest of all the attractions which to the believer are grouped about heaven, that we cannot foresee what shall be there; and that only when we reach that world shall we know fully, what now from limitation of nature we cannot know, what "God hath prepared for them that love him."

It is, therefore, in every view—on account of both its negative and its positive relations, because it shields us from central ruin, and because it assures us of immeasurable benefits—the grandest good for man, to be in the truest sense "reconciled to

God!" Unless he is so, he has no real and permanent good, in possession or in prospect. The want of this, to the thoughtful mind, makes all prosperity precarious and poor. The want of this makes a full and permanent peace in the soul a thing impossible. The attainment of this must give an element of constant, quick, inexhaustible delight, even to those most wearied and harassed. For, according as we stand to the Sovereign of the universe, that universe is to us a palace or a prison!

And now the gospel offers a way in which we may be "reconciled to God." Because it offers this, it is in the truest sense a GOSPEL; a message of glad tidings; a real Evangel. Because it offers this, it is the highest privilege of man first to accept this gospel himself, and to conform to it his own heart and life, and then to proclaim it to others around him, and strive to bring them to accept and love it. Because it offers this, on sufficient authority, and with the adequate guaranty of God's promise that whoso accepts and applies it aright shall never be disappointed, but shall as surely as life continues know all the glory and charm of heaven—because the gospel thus speaks to men, it is the one Supreme Revelation; which shall not be superseded; which may not be set aside, as systems of morality and philosophy may be; which can be surpassed by no civilization, and can be replaced, when once it has been lost, by no contrivance or plan of man; the system in which the highest spiritual *life of the world* is vitally, centrally, and inseparably bound up!

More than for all its marvels and its morals; more than for all its great examples, its general teachings, the splendor and scope of the history that attends it, the freedom and the peace, the great advance in all good arts, which it scatters on its path as it marches over the earth;—more than for these, or any of these, the gospel is precious, and is to be prized, as showing the mode in which man certainly, in which man only, can be reconciled to God, and thus made an heir of wisdoms and felicities supreme and everlasting.

WHAT IS THAT MODE THEN? The question is one of transcendent importance; and one which the gospel takes care to answer. Whatever else it may leave doubtful, it leaves no shadow of obscurity on this! Whatever else it may but lightly and casually touch—as it touches, for instance, the nature, the powers, and the offices of angels, or the station and the functions of saints in the future—it treats of his way of reconciliation in every part, and never falters or tires in presenting it.

A man is only to be reconciled to God THROUGH FAITH IN HIS SON: in him, whom God has specially appointed, and has conspicuously set forth, to be the mediator between him and ourselves:—this is always the representation of the Scriptures; not to be confounded with anything else, and not to be overlooked.—It is not by works of a practiced morality that we are to raise ourselves to acceptance with God. It is not by intellectual exertion and attainment, though these should make us familiar as students with all the forms of human thought. It is not by success in our several vocations, whatever they may be, as merchants, lawyers, inventors, teachers. It is not even by the sacrifice of our goods, the denial of our desires; by priestly intercession, or the invocation of saints. It is not by these, or by any of these, that we are severally to be reconciled to God. But it is by personal faith in his Son: a faith which each is competent to exercise; a faith which hath in it submission and sympathy; which leads us to devote ourselves entirely to Christ, and which carries us spontaneously into all such actions as we know will be dear and beautiful to him. This is the power, this the act, by which, through Christ, we are "reconciled to God."

Where this is wanting, that reconciliation cannot possibly be accomplished. Where this is experienced, there that for which the world's wide heart inarticulately longs the desire after which gives pathos and dignity to its best religions and highest literatures.—even that assimilation to God's spirit and will, and that re-adjustment of all our broken relations to him, which moralists and philosophers have searched for in

vain, and without which no soul can be at rest,—is certainly, perfectly, finally secured. We are thenceforth, whether we ourselves are at once and fully aware of it or not, from that moment onward if the faith has been a real one, the submission complete, we are the friends, the children of God; his children and heirs; partakers of his favor, and expectants of his home! Adversity, opposition, obloquy, pain—they all are powerless to put us a hair-breadth beyond the circle of his perfect sympathy. And death is but the dark-robed messenger, to usher us into his high presence, and open to us the Beatific Vision.

This is wonderful, amazing; yet, when we remember God's wisdom, and consider his grace, it is nowise incredible or even improbable.

In order that we be "reconciled to God," from whom we have departed, there is necessary as the first act: Repentance on our part; a repentance that suddenly and sharply arrests us in the course we have pursued, and leads us thenceforth to serve him with fidelity.—And such a repentance is involved and pre-supposed in the primary act of submission to Christ. Faith in him, to be real, must embrace and express this. Wherever this is not found, there the faith is evidently superficial or hypocritic. Wherever it is real, one turns from impurity with immediate recoil. Not as under constraint of an outward law, but in the impulse of an inward desire, mourning for the past, he gives up his sins!

In order that we be "reconciled to God," and be placed in normal relations to him, it is necessary that atonement be made for the past; that our long life of restless ungodliness, extending over ten, twenty, thirty, fifty, perhaps sixty or seventy years, and including a thousand acts and thoughts, that this be expiated by some atonement; so that the law of holiness shall be honored, which is the supremest law of the universe, and dearest to God's heart, even so as it would have been if we and all others had perfectly kept it. And so all systems of penance and sacrifice, which have been in fact universal on earth, have arisen to recognize and to satisfy this want.

If God did not supremely value his law of holiness, the universe would be worth nothing, with him at the head of it! It had better be terminated before today's sunset, than to have him say—as he would in effect say, if he pardoned sinners without an atonement—"Live on as you will, but repent before death, and that is satisfactory! All then shall be well with you'!' An atonement for sin before it is forgiven, is not more the demand of God's holy mind, than it is the necessary safeguard of the universe! For if he begins to look lightly upon sin, a darker than the primal chaos is imminent at once!

And now, just such expiation as this is provided by Christ, in his vicarious obedience, suffering, and death on the cross. In the mystery of his divine condescension, of his unspeakable love for sinners, he voluntarily was made a human subject of the law which he had given. He obeyed it as a man. He expressed in all his life its purity. He even met that death of a strange anguish, unspeakable, unsearchable, with the hiding of the face of the Father himself attending and crowning it, when standing in the sinner's place. And so he honored and magnified the law, and showed most clearly God's infinite regard for it; and made it possible for the penitent to be pardoned. He made the law as clearly supreme in God's administration, as it would have been if every man had been perfectly holy, or every sinner had been forever condemned! —And now the fullness of that atonement is appropriated to himself by every man who receives it in faith. And so again he is "reconciled to God." The chasm of the past is bridged over between us, and a new record, white and clean, is opened for every penitent offender.

But a yet more subtle change than this is demanded in order to such reconciliation; a change in the spirit and the heart of the man. He must become like God himself in temper and purpose, in order to be truly affiliated with him. A new sympathy must

be born in him, with the views, the plans, and the spirit of him from whom he has so radically departed. Every man's moral instincts declare this to him, when he lets them speak with unbiased voice! The need of regenerating power has a voice in philosophy, as well as in the scripture.

And this again, this inward change of preference and taste, of desire and character, is both pre-supposed in the experience of faith, and is carried forward towards completion by that.—Christ comes to manifest God to men. The character of the Unseen is embodied in him, and so through him is revealed unto the world. He who gives himself to Christ, devoting himself to his service, does it because he sees in him a being deserving veneration and love, and the active obedience to which these will prompt. And the more he contemplates the character of Christ, the more he studies his life and work, and sees to what ends his plans are directed—the more he personally communes with him, in thought and prayer, and recalls the great work he undertakes for his people, the great offices he fulfills for them, the perfect spirit he always expresses —the more that man who believes in Christ is led to honor, to adore, and to serve him, the more does he come into intimate sympathy of spirit with him.

Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. He is in some measure, at the beginning of this course, in harmony with Christ: who is, in fact, but God himself, revealed amid our human conditions. He comes to be more and more closely and fully in sympathy with him, as his faith exerts more influence on him; till not to sympathize with God in his plans, in his reverence for righteousness, in his benevolent regard for all moral beings—not thus to be in harmony with God, would give him the keenest pain. God's will becomes his will; and the thoughts of him whom Christ reveals are the law and the life of his ardent mind.

And thus at last, when this process is perfected, it would seem from the scriptures that God is ready to show him more favor, because he has turned from iniquity to faith; as the father rejoiced with peculiar tenderness over the prodigal son restored; as the shepherd for the sheep, and the woman for the coin, which had severally been lost and then been found. God seems to be represented in such passages as these, as taking the Christian to relations of peculiar intimacy with himself; rejoicing over him with a tenderness of affection in which the angels do not partake!

The sins of him who thus believes are all forgiven. He has turned from sin, and has given himself in free dedication to God in his Son. He loves Christ now; and more and more rejoices in him, as he pursues the Christian path. He loves the God who is manifested in Christ; and feels his highest powers respond to that which is highest, purest in the universe. And so he is inwardly, perfectly, finally reconciled to God! What never in any other way can be attained, is attained through this simple act of faith in God's Son. And all the promises which God hath given to those who are his friends—all these are for him who has from the heart obeyed this great injunction of the apostle; who has been truly "reconciled to God" through Jesus Christ.

Not an enemy, but an ally; not an unwilling servant, but a loyal, grateful, dutiful, son; not a felon, but a prince; not a man oppressed with fear and foreboding, but a man pervaded, at intervals at least, even already, with inward peace, and looking for a triumph which the earth cannot parallel, which the earth has not room for;—so stands the Christian before his God; redeemed by the cross; renewed by the Spirit; accepted through grace; more than peer of the angels! And life is his, and death, and immortality! Nothing can really oppress or harm him; but all things shall work, actively and together, to do him good.

That man hath no more cause to fear; and he may know that every hope, though multiplied to tenfold greatness, shall be surpassed, as well as answered, amid the future!

So plain is the act, so vast the result, so infinite the privilege, so instant, constant, imperative the duty, of exercising faith in the Son of God! that faith which says "I believe," and then worships! that faith which carries every soul into prompt and glad submission to him, and thereafter determines the character and the life by a new, a higher, a spiritual law! This faith is God's most plain, and just, and necessary requirement. It is as well man's noblest privilege. It is the condition of the life everlasting!

My friends, what can I further say, save only those words of Paul: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God!" Especially would I urge this single, definite, memorable lesson on those who never yet have acknowledged Christ, and never have felt true faith in him; who know not the joy of a personal consecration to this great Savior and King of men; who live as the world lives, amused with its pleasures, engrossed in its pursuits; and who confess, to others at least, and perhaps to themselves, no higher want.

My friends, remember a moment what God is! Think how kindness and goodness unite with power in all his action; how the universe glows with his Divine brightness! But above all, unsearchable, arises God; and none approximates his glory.

On every hand he lives around us. In every force, and form, and law, his mind is seen. And through all worlds, that march above, his presence is; and through all ages that shall come, his power, his knowledge, his wisdom, and his grace shall stand unchanged! Perfect in goodness, perfect in wisdom, his character is the real glory of the universe, as his life is its force, and his power its support!

To be then truly affiliated to him—this is the grandest good of man; the grandest good of any of his creatures.

Oh, then, to you, to *you*, I say, "Be ye, this day, each one and all—by faith in Christ, and that intelligent, noble submission, which this implies—be reconciled to God!" You are not now; you know you are not. That dark unrest which lurks within, proves that you are not. Each motion of your conscience declares you are not. Your love of the world is proof that you are not. That fear of death which now and then makes you to shiver, is a vivid and present demonstration of the fact! Be reconciled to him. It is not righteousness only that urges it. It is the simplest, plainest prudence. For save you are, there is for you on earth no hope, and in the future no scene of safety!

Oh, turn and live! Obey, believe, and do Christ's will! Become a child, an heir of God! accepted of him, through the Son! lifted to inward sympathy with him, through that influence of his Spirit which sanctifies the heart!—or that steep grave which yawns before you shall open as you enter it, into the very abyss of darkness; and your eternity be one vast night!

From every page of nature as of scripture; from a past all restless with painful search; from a future whose experience we now and here each hour determine; from the soul that never is born as it should be, till born into true relations to God; from Sabbaths and from death-beds; from the cross and the ascension; from heaven, that rings with that great jubilee, the echo of which rolls swiftly on us through the harps of the Apocalypse, and the mystery of which our highest raptures here foreshadow; from hell, that heaves as Christ portrays it, and ceaselessly tosses, in the gloom of God's frown;—from each alike, from all combined, comes up this constant, appealing cry: "Ye men whom God hath made immortal, and who by sin are parted from him, be ye this hour, by faith in Christ, through his sacrifice and his Spirit, reconciled to God!"

God, by his grace, bless to each one the urgent lesson, and make it indeed to all of us a message from the skies; and unto him be all the praise!

ST. PAUL'S GOSPEL.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh; even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more.—II. Cor. v: 16.

I wonder what impression that strange sentence produces upon the mind of an average Englishman. Yet St. Paul undoubtedly regarded that sentence as one of the most important and characteristic he ever wrote. It reminds us of the striking difference between him and the other Apostles. You and I may not think much about it. Every one thought much of it when it was written. St. Paul never saw Christ; he never heard Christ during our Savior's brief life on earth of thirty-three years. But all the other Apostles, as St. Peter was most careful to say when Matthias was elected into the apostolic band, had been disciples "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that he was received up from them into heaven." But while Christ lived on earth St. Paul never knew him. Now, the apostles and the Jewish Christians generally attached the very greatest importance to the fact that they had thus known Christ. And many Jewish Christians went all over the world declaring that St. Paul. because he had not known Christ after the flesh, was not an apostle, and could not be an apostle; that he lacked what, in their judgment, was an essential qualification for the office. This very consideration was one of the principal causes of his life-long controversies with the Church of Jerusalem. St. Paul, on the other hand, instead of bewailing his disqualification, as they represented it, declared with special emphasis it made no difference at all.

You will remember how emphatically in Galatians he repudiated the idea that he owed anything at all to the other apostles. When, after many years, he did go up to Jerusalem, it was not to receive ordination at their hands, or their approval or their sanction. He declares that their knowledge of Christ after the flesh was no advantage to them whatever, and in the passage before us he goes so far as to say that if he had known Christ after the flesh, he would have rid himself of the knowledge, for that knowledge at that particular time was a danger and a temptation. It led men to exaggerate the importance of those things about Christ which were seen and temporal, and to overlook to some extent those things which alone were of everlasting importance. As a matter of fact, those who did thus know Christ after the flesh either never realized his true glory or were many long years in coming to the knowledge of him. In order to guard against this misconception St. Paul went even to an extreme, and emphasized his ignorance of Christ after the flesh. Have you ever realized the startling fact that St. Paul never once refers to the lovely life of our Lord as recorded in the gospels? He never mentions any of his miracles, parables, words, or deeds. He mentions only two events in the life of our Lord—his death and his resurrection. And these two he mentions simply as great spiritual facts, without any one of those human details and circumstances upon which the sacred biographers lovingly linger.

What is the meaning of St. Paul's astounding silence? His silence teaches us

even more significantly than his speech, that the essence of the Gospel, the good news from God, lies far below the mere details of the human life of our Lord. You and I are particularly interested in this remarkable feature of St. Paul's experience, for we are like him. We are not like St. Peter, who was a disciple from the beginning; nor like St. John, who had leaned upon his breast. We are like St. Paul, we never knew Christ after the flesh. And we may have been apt to lament bitterly that we did not know him, though there is no reason to believe that if we had we should have believed him more eagerly than those who did know him and crucified him. St. Paul declares that you and I are under no disadvantage at all, because we never knew our Lord after the flesh. We may know him as St. Paul himself knew him, better than any one else except St. John. His knowledge is expressed in that ever-memorable phrase, which is one of the most striking utterances even of this striking writer. He says: "It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal his Son in me." Not outside of me, but *in* me. O, what does that mean? It means that there are two totally different ways of contemplating Jesus Christ. We may think of him as the wondrous one, who lived in Palestine for thirty-three years twenty centuries ago. We may think of what was "seen and temporal" in the blessed one. Or we may think of what was "unseen and eternal," as true to-day as it ever was. We may dwell on the known incidents of that lovely life just as we might dwell upon Plato's incomparable account of the trial and death of Socrates. Any such study of the mere fragmentary history of the beautiful incidents in the human life of our Lord is as inspiring as it is ennobling. But it is outside of us.

On the other hand, we may think of Jesus Christ in the way in which every one, if his life is to be real, must think of him, in the way in which St. Paul thought of him. We may think of him as the Risen Christ, the Living Christ, the Christ in whom we all at this very moment live and move and have our being. This is what St. Paul called "my gospel"—the gospel which God sent to him by revelation, the gospel which he was better qualified to propound, because he was not confused by any knowledge of Christ after the flesh. This, indeed, is the great mystery which God has revealed through St. Paul to us, "Christ in us the hope of glory." Not merely dying for us, living at a great distance from us, in space and time, but Christ in us—the ground of our true hope. A lady recently came to one of the sisters, restless, eager, longing for repose and for a noble career. But she said, "You must not talk to me about Christianity, it is meaningless. Christians are inconsistent and unreal." That might seem to some a very great predicament. But I hope that all will come to me in that way. It will be a great relief. The world this moment is ignorant of Christ, because it wastes its time in speaking about Christians and Christianity. As if there were anything worth talking about except Christ! To any such person I should be overjoyed to say, "I am only too thankful to observe the limits of conversation you have so wisely imposed. God forbid that I should waste your time in gossiping about Christians. But I am quite unable to talk about you unless I talk about Christ, for you are unaccountable without Christ." Some time ago Professor Adams, the great astronomer, discovered that Uranus was not moving as it ought to move. It would not obey the law of gravitation. It was moving out of its proper orbit. There must be some reason for its disturbance. There must be some other planet attracting it. So he said, "Look into another part of the heavens, and you will see that there is a great unknown planet attracting this known planet out of its course." They did so, and the strange restlessness of Uranus was accounted for by the fact that it was under the influence of the then unknown planet Neptune. It would be absurd for any one to say to me, "I want you to account for the strange movements of the planet Uranus, but you must not talk about Neptune." I should say, "My dear sir, it is useless for me to talk about Uranus unless I can speak about Neptune which attracts it." In the same way your restlessness, your agitation, cannot

be accounted for unless you will allow me to name the name of Christ, who himself said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Your thirst for true goodness is not self-originated. Christ is agitating you. Christ, indeed, is in you, bringing you to himself, as he is in every man. Even a heathen writer like Xenophon long ago described this mystery, saying, "I feel as if I had two souls." Plato, too, describes the human soul as a chariot drawn by two horses. There seemed to be two influences dragging in opposite directions—a worse self and what we call a better self. That better self is Christ. St. Paul himself was amazed and perplexed and agitated, and said, "What is the matter with me? I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. I have kept all the Law, and yet I am as wretched as I can be." Then he discovered that it was Christ who made him wretched. At last, he said, "It pleased God to reveal himself in me. Then I realized that there could be no happiness for me until I submitted to the Divine Savior. Thank God, I did not know him after the flesh, for I might then have been prevented from knowing as I know now, that he is the great light of God who lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Now let us take a totally different case, an absolutely agnostic man, who declares that he never felt the least religious emotion, a man of high character and very scrupulous conscience. You say to me, how do you reconcile that case with your theory of Christ being in the heart of every man? If in mid-winter you wander with me into the wood, would you say it was dead? But wait for the sunshine and the rain, and you shall see the summer. And in the case of this agnostic, wait until your Father in heaven has sent him the sunshine of his love and the rain of his grace, and you shall find strange stirrings in the depths of his soul. Of him we may say as Christ said of those called physically dead, "He is not dead, but sleepeth." This is indeed what St. Paul meant in the first part of my text where he says, "We henceforth know no man after the flesh." He not only refused to know Christ after the flesh, but he refused to know anybody else after the flesh. He could not think of any man apart from the Divine Christ. He never thought of any man without realizing that Christ was in every man. As I look around and see men and women whose names and histories I do not know, I am buoyed up by the delicious revelation that St. Paul has made to me. You are not a mere man or woman to me. You are men and women redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. You are human beings dear to God, dearer than you are to yourself or anybody else. No person is what he would have been if Christ had not died, and if he had not become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Why are you restless? Why are you dissatisfied? Why are you disappointed and full of doubt? Because you have never realized that Christ is in you. I often say, Come to Christ, and there is a sense in which you must come. But you could not come unless Christ had already come to you. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," says Christ. Certainly you are all elected of divine grace. But whether that becomes effective depends upon your decision, upon your co-operation with God. God loves you all. He desires to save you all. Jesus Christ is nearer to you at this moment than the person who sits next to you. I often invite persons to come to the inquiry-room, because it is encouraging to others, and it enables us to speak to them. But Jesus Christ is no more in the inquiry-room than he is here. There are, I apprehend, few people here like that agnostic of whom I have spoken. But there are those who have intensely desired to trust in Christ. That desire did not originate in your own soul. It is a sign of his nearness. You remember how Robinson Crusoe thought that he was on a lonely island. But one day he saw a foot-print in the sand, and to his astonishment he was not alone. And you find the print of a foot in your soul. It is the print of the foot that was crucified on the cross. You are not alone in that solitary island of your innermost soul. Christ is there to destroy the power of sin, and to make you like himself. How many are disposed to say, like the woman of Samaria when she was faced by

theological and ecclesiastical controversies, "I know that Messias cometh; when he has come he will declare unto us all things." But the words were no sooner out of her mouth than the unknown stranger said, "I that speak unto thee am he." And the day will come when Christ will so reveal himself to you as he revealed himself to St. Paul. My brother, my sister, the day has come now, if you will but listen. The voice which awakens the dead is speaking to you. Rise, and he will give you light.

"THE BLIGHT OF UNBELIEF."

GEO. R. LUNN, D.D.

And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.—Matt. xiii: 58.

I have chosen for my theme this morning "The Blight of Unbelief," desiring to apply my words to the individual Christian, to speak specifically about the half-hearted beliefs which have taken the place of the whole-hearted beliefs that ought to characterize us as Christians and as a Christian church. I am not speaking of the unbelief of those who will have nothing to do with Jesus. "And Jesus did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." This is the pathetic comment made by St. Matthew relative to Christ's failure at Nazareth. We are so accustomed to hear of the wonderful achievements of Jesus that we seldom give attention to his conspicuous failures. The most conspicuous failure was his inability to accomplish anything in his own city. The fame of his mighty works preceded him so that wherever he went great multitudes thronged to hear his wonderful words and witness his still more wonderful deeds. The logic of events pointed toward the accomplishment of an extraordinary work in his own country and city. The expectation in this regard, however, is met with keenest disappointment. They acknowledged his greatness as a teacher, being astonished at his wisdom. They even acknowledged that mighty works had been done by him. But at once some "superior" person or persons put forth the query, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" And they were offended in him. Note the absurdity of their reasoning. They are astonished at his wisdom. Their inner life accepted his words as true. It was that in his teaching which seemed to appeal to that in them,—from which no denial could come. Why therefore did they not accept him? Simply because they refused to accept any revelation of God through the channels of ordinary life and everyday experience. They are like some of us here. We fail to find God in life's every day. We want some mighty unheaval of experience to teach us in regard to the great things of God. We do not look through the everyday experiences of life and find God there. Now truth is truth, it matters not through whom or by what method it comes. The acknowledgment of any truth carries with it the obligation to put that truth into practice. Failure at this point means the loss of the power whereby we perceive truth. Jesus' follow countrymen testified as to his wisdom, marveled at it, and straightway began to depreciate his

teaching for the following reasons: He was a carpenter's son; his mother was called Mary; they knew his brothers and sisters, and therefore they were offended. Was objection ever more absurd? Would they have obeyed his teachings if he had been an emperor's son? They knew that to accept that teaching meant a definite and positive type of life, and that is where the rub came. They did not want to follow out that kind of life, therefore they began to find fault with the one through whom the great truth came. "We cannot expect truth from a carpenter's son. There must be something wrong somewhere," thought the Nazarenes, therefore they were offended.

Under the cloak of their spoken criticisms there lay a deeper reason for their rejection of Christ. It was this: They refused to acknowledge the affirmations of the soul. Their souls responded to the truth. But instead of accepting what the soul affirmed as true, instead of accepting it and then acting, they began to criticise the medium through which the truth came. Omnipotence is powerless in the presence of obduracy. Even a child can raise its hand and shake its tiny fist in the face of God Almighty, and God Almighty can do nothing. Omnipotence itself is powerless before an obdurate heart. "And Jesus did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief," and we take it for granted that they were church people, since they were in the synagogue.

The atmosphere of criticism is deadly, it is absolutely destructive of all high resolve and noble activity. Criticism is born of unbelief, and unbelief is the most deadly and ruinous virus that can ever poison a human soul.

Let us ask ourselves as to what constitutes belief, and its opposite, unbelief. To treat it first negatively; belief is not the mere intellectual assent to any dogma or creed. The proper interrogation to use in testing our belief is not the old formula, "Do you believe so and so?" But the far more profound question, "Do you give active response to all the high and holy spiritual impulses which God himself produces in your heart of hearts?" That question can come to every individual. Do you give active response to those spiritual impulses that come to you by so many ways? Do you give active response and live in accordance with them? When your heart thrills with the thought of being kind and loving and noble, do you aspire to put into activity those noble thoughts. You do not, for unbelief has gripped you. It is not believing so much as it is doing. No better definition of belief has ever been given than that by Emerson: "Belief consists in accepting the affirmations of the soul; unbelief in denying them." Belief deals directly with these realities, not with any human attempt to give them expression in words, it matters not how nearly perfect the expression may be. God makes his appeal direct to the heart of man, to accept these great revelations that the soul brings, and to order his life accordingly. I am not pleading with you to accept any creed or dogma, not even the Bible,—not any doctrine. I am going deeper than all that. All these things, every one of them, from the Bible to our creed, are but formulations of a life that has stirred in the heart of man from the beginning of time and will stir. Are you true to that? God deals directly with each human soul.

Now to escape the demands which the soul makes upon life, the prosaic mind and deadened heart make a subterfuge of creed and dogma. The creed, the dogma, may be grand and inspirational in their effect, but only when you go back of your creed to the undying conviction which gave it birth, only when that conviction is made your own does the creed live. You might spend your days in some beautiful cathedral, with the Apostles' Creek on your right and the Athanasian Creed on your left, with the Bible before you and crucifixes behind and around you, and yet be the most godless wretch under the magnificent vault of heaven. You might store your mind with verses and chapters of the Holy Book, and be able to repeat an endless number of the grand hymns of the church, and still be worse than an infidel. You might be so regular and punctual about church attendance as to let no Sabbath pass without your presence in the sanctu-

ary and yet go out on Monday and oppress the widow and rob the fatherless. Do you not see that your creed must flower into righteous conduct or else remain a curse? Far and above all these grand dogmas is that life which you and I can live directly with God. What you believe most deeply and truly enters into and constitutes your very life.

You may be surprised to find how much unbelief there is in your life, and wherever there is unbelief, there is the beginning of death. Unbelief casts its blight of impotency over all high thought and unselfish endeavor. No mighty works are accomplished by it or in its presence. Jesus Christ is as powerless today where unbelief bars the door as in the days at Nazareth. You pretend to follow Jesus Christ, but you have followed so far away that you have lost sight of the Master. You pretend to believe in the coming of the kingdom of God upon earth, but what are you doing to bring this world nearer to the ideal of Jesus? The Kingdom of God grows by contagion. Is your belief in that kingdom so genuine as to be contagious and extend the glorious power to other hearts? You pretend to believe in the gospel, do you not? And yet that gospel needs a voice and you have said nothing all these years concerning what ought to be the most vital belief in your soul. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Then prove it by service. There is no other way. Not standing here and confessing and professing. It is service. We are saved to serve. Do you believe in him? Then serve him.

Now another point. Jesus has chosen personal testimony, witness bearing, as the method by which to perpetuate Christianity. "Ye shall be witness unto me in Jerusalem and Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." These are Christ's own words to his followers. The usual methods of propagating a great cause were entirely discarded by him. Planting his ideals in the hearts of a few poor men he started them out unheralded to revolutionize the world. But he saw and he knew the response that the soul will always make to that which is alive and that which is vital, and they did bring this gospel, bring this kingdom to the hearts of men. "They went about doing good. They told the story of what God was to them, and what he did for them and how he found them and changed them; and they proved the truth of their story by living changed and Christlike lives. The result was that men believed them." Thus the kingdom of God has come down the ages. It has come down by the contagion of holy enthusiasm and holy love. Love has enkindled love. Faith has encouraged faith. Heart has touched heart and only in that way and by that method has the gospel been extended. I was reading just yesterday of one of the greatest reformers and master-spirits of America. He was compelled to confess that he was reached by the power of the personal testimony of a Christian man in the humblest walks of life. Here are his own words: "I used to get my father's hired man to tell me the story of his conversion over and over again, until he got tired telling it to me. That was my earliest Christian awakening. As a boy I had everything I wanted,—heritage, family influence, adequate resources; but when I listened to that poor man tell me what the Lord had done for his soul and what he expected from God in the future life, I used to cry and wish that I were he with his poverty, and not myself with my riches. I believed him to be a Christian, and he was. I saw him in the barn, I saw him in the field. I saw him when he had hurt himself,—I saw him under all circumstances, and he bore silent as well as vocal testimony that he had seen the Lord Jesus and been transformed by his might. From my experience with him I have found out one thing, and that is this, that a real Christian man telling what Christ has done for his soul is to another man like the sound of the eternal world."

I believe that many of us can respond to the testimony of this man. We are thrilled to the very roots of our being whenever we hear the recital of a genuine conversion, a genuine turning to God. If there is no joy that thrills your heart as you think of that Christ who is conquering the world today, then you do not believe. But

when one truly believes in the reigning Jesus, he goes forth as a mighty power to renew faith in other men and bring fresh courage to their hearts. One such Christian becomes a force to lift up and to encourage and to ennoble his fellow men. Oh, let it never be said that Jesus could do no mighty work in the heart of your friend or the soul of your loved one because of your unbelief. Of all the sins that are terrible, the most terrible is that of the man who is standing in the doorway of the kingdom of God and will not enter himself and is hindering others from entering. Pray, dear friends, pray, and pray, and pray that God may take from you your unbelief with its blight and bring to you belief with its blessing. Go forth and be what you know you ought to be. Go forth and do what you know you ought to do.

THE WAGES OF SIN.

LINCOLN G. HULLEY, D.D.

For the wages of sin is death.—Romans vi: 23.

The picture before the mind of the Apostle Paul, if he had in mind the etymology of the words as he wrote, was of the ranks of the Roman army, drawn up and receiving from their paymaster their wages. Let us observe there is nothing arbitrary in the principle announced in this text. There are some people that do not like the doctrine of hell, who feel that it is contrary to the goodness of God. The wages of sin is death, here and now, in this world. There is no reason for you to think the spiritual world is organized on any different principle from that of the natural world. Paul says the thing that sin has earned, that is due to sin as a matter of right and justice, is death—nothing short of that.

There are three things I would have you notice in connection with this text: (1) nature's invariable logic, (2) nature moves along lines of least resistance, (3) nature tends to permanency of character.

Nature's invariable logic. Jesus grounded one of his greatest utterances on this principle: "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so a good tree bringeth forth good fruit and a corrupt tree bringeth forth corrupt fruit. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them" Every deed carries with it its own legitimate consequences, has bound up with it its own inevitable issues. Colonel Ingersoll once said that if he had been making the universe and had infinite power he would have made a universe in which health would be the rule and not disease. That is what God has made; disease is the exception. You ask, "Why did not God make a universe in which righteousness is the order?" He did, and sin is a perversion of that moral order which he created. Matthew Arnold said that he discovered in this universe a power which makes for righteousness. Anybody who made a study of the world ground would have seen it. Had he looked, he would probably also have seen a power in the universe that makes for love, for mercy.

In the First Psalm we read: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" You do not have to appeal to God to secure a blessing to such a man, that is

just the way he has organized his universe. Take the principle as you see it stated in the Fifth Commandment. It falls to reason that the child who is obedient tends to prolong his days; that is the rule, there may be many exceptions, but the consequence that occurs oftenest is the rule. So these principles are not arbitrary, they are grounded in the very nature of this universe. The ethics of the Bible are true, not because they depend on the will of God, not because God says they are true; but God says they are true because they are true; they depend on the nature of God, not on his volition. "The wages of sin is death"—that sentence is writ large all over this universe. All law in this universe is the mandate of a law-giver.

The Old Testament has little to say about immortality, about a future life, but those old wise men, inspired of God, treat of this same doctrine. Listen to what they say about it: "Evil shall slay the wicked." You do not have to call on God to do it. Evil will react on the evil-doer, and he shall be held down with the cords of his own sin. Again, "They shall eat of the fruit of their own wishes, and be filled with their own devices." They have to live with their own deeds. One of the greatest college presidents of this country says, "What is the greatest punishment of a liar? That he is a liar." You cannot find anything worse. It is the kind of hell Dante has given in his "Inferno."

There is no suspension of this law. The wages of sin is death. That takes in everyone, whether or not he takes the name of Christian. Christianity is not an insurance policy that you may escape from your sin. A woman once made bitter complaints against God because her husband died. He had been a good man and a faithful pastor, but he had overworked his physical strength and succumbed. The minister to whom she went said, "Madam, one of two things was necessary in this case—either your husband had to conform his life to the laws of Almighty God, or else God had to change the laws of his universe and conform them to what your husband proposed to do."

The Old Testament corroborates this teaching again and again. It says, "Be sure your sin will find you out." That does not mean that you will be found out, for quite likely you will not, but your sin will find *you* out, it will work in your spiritual nature.

The doctrine of hell is not irrational; it is grounded in the very logic of nature. Fire burns. Poison kills. Like causes produce like effects. All law is divine—the laws of psychology, of chemistry, of geology. There is not a law in the universe that is not a law of God and therefore divine. We run a line through life and say all on one side is secular and all on the other is sacred. The Hebrews had no such line. They said that all life is sacred, that God is all. They heard his voice in the thunder. The earthquake was the tread of his feet on the mountain. It was the vital conception of God that the old Hebrews had.

Whatever spiritual law is written in your heart, that is a divine law. You might as well hope to escape the consequences when you put your finger on the red hot plate, as to escape the consequences when you sin. Every virtue—love, mercy, courage, truth—is a law of God's universe, and no man can fly in the face of it without suffering the consequences.

In all this, nature follows the lines of least resistance. In the breaking up of character it is along the lines of least resistance. The mountain stream follows the line of least resistance in its course. So in acquiring a new habit we are following this law of least resistance, tracing out new paths in our nervous system. The disintegration of a character goes on slowly, steadily, noiselessly, but surely. In the Nineteenth Psalm there is one verse: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." We know not the character of our natures. Here is a man who has been respected in his community, who suddenly shocks that community by some misdeed People say, "It was so sudden." No, it was not. The end came suddenly; the

work was done possibly through years of time. Search your hearts, my friends, search them the best you can. There still may be lurking in your character tendencies that you are not aware of, that may bring ruin upon you suddenly. Even while a life is integrating along many lines, that same life may be disintegrating along some line that may crush it.

Finally, nature tends to final permanence of character in every one of us. Do you remember the phrase in the latter part of Revelation, where the angel of God pronounced judgment on the souls of men, saying: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Your life shall be what you make it.

Jesus once said of the Jews that their eyes were blinded that they could not see, their ears deafened that they could not hear, their hearts hardened that they could not understand. They had closed every avenue by which the Christ might have reached them. Every one of you is tending toward that final permanence of character. In the New Testament you have the expression that some men's sins "go before them into judgment;" they are already judged, the doom of sin is upon them. The grooves and the lines and the marks that we are constantly making on our spiritual nature constitute our character, and these characters are all we shall take into the next world with us. Let us remember that character is setting its seal upon us every day, and that we are expressing in our characters every day the law that the wages of sin is death.

THOMAS.

F. W. KRUMACHER.

The Lord weigheth the spirits.—Proverbs xvi: 2.

If, on the one hand, this passage of Solomon excite alarm, there is, on the other, a consolatory and encouraging aspect in which it may be viewed. It may come to pass that the world shall heap its honors upon thee, whilst the sentence given above with reference to thee, shall be, *"weighed and found wanting!"* But, conversely, it may also happen, that whilst the world passes the harshest judgments on thee, the order is sent down from heaven in thy favor, *"Touch not the apple of mine eye!"* The judicial eye of Omniscience looks through a man's exterior and sounds the depths of his heart, and pierces searchingly the inmost recesses of his soul, and it may come to pass, in defiance of a censorious world, that a man as deeply prostrate as David shall be commended as "a man after God's own heart;" or one like Peter, outrageously denying his Lord, shall become the object of the most tender Divine love, whilst another, who goes about with the nimbus of a saint shall be branded and cast off by God as a *"whited sepulchre."* And as it may be the case that one who frequently has backslidden may stand higher in the sight of God than many another who appears to have walked in the way of the commandments blamelessly, so it is not to be confidently affirmed that he

who makes a good confession shall always rank in the judgment of God before the doubter, nor even the believer before him who is still wrestling with the unbelief of his heart.

John xx: 24-29: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you! Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Let us consider, first, how the story of Thomas *confirms anew the truth of the resurrection of Christ;* then, *what a comforting prospect it reveals to the conscientious doubters amongst us;* afterwards, *what a new and brilliant light it sheds on the superhuman dignity of the person of Christ;* and, lastly, *how it enlightens us as to the nature and essence of saving faith!*

I. Many may have been rendered uneasy by the surmise, that the first witnesses of the resurrection of Christ might have believed too hastily, might have been led astray by their earnest desire that their Master *should* live again, and might thus have mistaken a mere dream of their fancy for a real manifestation. This story cuts away the foundation for such a thought. We here see a man who certainly could not be taxed with being guilty of credulity. Thomas was no dreamer, but a man in whom scrutinizing thought predominated over imagination, in whom reflection outweighed feeling, and withal of a hot, passionate temperament, somewhat inclined to melancholy. He must needs comprehend that which he was to receive as truth; and ere belief could reach his heart, it had to break through a whole redoubt of arguments and scruples. Thomas was inclined to look at everything rather from the dark than the bright side. Recall for a moment the scene in John xi, where our Lord decidedly opposed the anxious dissuasions of his disciples, with reference to his return to Judea, the land of his enemies. Who was it that broke forth in those words of melancholy resignation, "Let us also go that we may die with him?" It was Thomas, who, in the event of his Master's going, saw nothing but utter destruction in prospect, together with the annihilation of their hopes. And who was it subsequently (John xiv. 4), when the Lord said unto his disciples, "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know," that said most disconsolately, and not without a touch of ill-humor and of melancholy frowardness, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?". The same disciple again.

Thomas was at Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection, and with the disciples when they received the report of the women as to our Lord's vacated tomb and the vision of angels. But from all that was reported to him, he only considered himself justified in inferring a knavish trick on the part of the enemy, and in ascribing the pretended vision of angels solely to the lively imagination of the excited and credulous women. Overwhelmed by hopeless sorrow, he had soon, much too soon, withdrawn himself from the circle of his fellow-apostles, and, so had deprived himself of the intense joy of being present at that evening assembly, in the midst of which our Lord presented himself, and liberated the disciples from all suspense and doubt. This is what Thomas lost by his over-hasty separation; and every other wilful separation from the "holy catholic Church of Christ," and from "the communion of saints," will avenge itself similarly. He who determines on such a step renounces blessings for which he

will never find compensation. He has no share in the blessed efforts put forth by the great brotherhood in the field of missions, in Bible societies, and other works of faith and love; he no longer commemorates with the Church its victories and triumphs. He becomes one-sided, contracted, narrow-minded, and destitute of love. Sequestered from the great body of the Church of Jesus, there can be no happiness, no prosperity.

On that hallowed evening Thomas was no longer in the circle of the brethren. Afterward his brethren sought him in his retirement, and made known to him what great and glorious things they had experienced. But, instead of exulting in the resurrection, there is something in his manner which seems to say, "Are you indeed dreaming? I am not to be entertained with a child's tale!" We are pleased to meet this disciple in the Easter narrative. He met the report of the resurrection with all those doubts which make belief so difficult to very many in the present day. Now if this skeptic be at length convinced and constrained to believe, will not his conversion be considered as an evidence of the historical truth of the Easter miracle?

II. Let no one be mistaken in the character of our Thomas. He was not a doubter from want of love to truth, or from a vain longing to acquire the reputation of being "a man of superior intelligence," or from a secret aversion to Christ and his cause. No one in the world would have been happier than he had he been able to discover a valid reason for opening his heart to the faith of his fellow-disciples. The honest doubter is one who really seeks after truth, and fully acknowledges that the position of those who yield unconditional faith to the gospel of Christ is most enviable, and sympathizing with the man at Jerusalem who exclaimed wishfully, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" he frequently says the same. Hence many stand aloof, and, as from a distance, regard the kingdom of Christian comforts, hopes, and expectations, as a paradise to which they are attracted, but from which they are separated by a wide gulf.

A week has elapsed since the day of the resurrection. We are again transported to Jerusalem, and into the same circle of disciples, whom our risen Lord had surprised by that evening visit which brought all their grief to an end. And, behold, Thomas has again renewed his relations with the brethren! nay, he could no longer exist withdrawn from their fellowship. Suddenly, throughout the assembly, the greeting, so well known to most of them, "Peace be with you!" resounds again; and when they, joyously surprised, look up, there *He* stands again, bodily before them. And to whom does he draw near after that he had so graciously greeted the assembly? The unbelieving, perverse disciple is this time the object of his marks of attention. Petrified with astonishment, reverence, and shame, Thomas sees him approach! Nevertheless he has nothing to fear! The dreadful day is not yet come when thousands, like him, will stand before the Lord, trembling with far greater reason than he, because in him, of whom they once rebelliously said, *"We will not have this man to reign over us,"* they now, to their utter consternation, and for the first time, recognize the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the Judge both of the living and the dead. To unbelieving Thomas our Lord still came as the *Prince of Peace.* Though Thomas did not believe, the heavenly spark of love still faintly glimmered within him, and therefore the oil of his faith could not be entirely exhausted. Our Savior addresses him, and literally repeats Thomas's own words, *"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."* What must have been the disciple's experience at this moment? Thomas has not touched the wounds of his Lord,—those signs of his victory over death, the grave, and hell,—but he has read in them his everlasting redemption, and from this hour he no longer doubts that his Master is really alive. And it was also *his Lord's desire* that his apostle should be thoroughly convinced of the historical truth of the great fact, to which he was to testify—it being the basis of all Christianity.

Let us adore the condescending love with which the Easter Prince met his unbelieving disciple, and let us realize in it comfort in reference to those among us, who, driven about by many a storm of doubt, cannot yet reach the port of the kingdom of God. If they desire in good earnest to reach that haven, and if with their doubts there be associated a secret feeling of the enviable blissful state of those who already have attained to faith, and if withal there be united a well sustained wrestling for truth, and fervent prayer for illumination, they may rest assured that they are not only taken into the affections of the "Good Shepherd," but likewise into his charge and guidance. For these also the time is at hand when their experience will be coincident with that of their brother Thomas; the Lord will, in some mode or other, come to their help, or, by some unmistakable manifestation of his wondrous and peace-inspiring nearness, will remove the veil from before their eyes. It is precisely on the ground of such happy experiences with which he surprises them, and which put an end to all uncertainty, that he gives the solemn injunction, "Be not faithless, but believing."

III. Overcome with awe, amazement, and veneration, Thomas stands for some moments motionless before his Lord. But then, raised far above himself in a moment of supernatural enlightenment, with his knees bending to the dust, his heart pours forth a confession, higher, richer, and more comprehensive than any that had ever, till then, been uttered by mortal lips. All the rays of celestial grandeur which Thomas had ever seen stream from the person of the Master, as well as all the intimations of his superhuman dignity which had ever forced themselves upon him whilst listening to his sayings, or witnessing his wondrous acts, now met and combined as in a focus. "My Lord and my God!" he exclaims—an utterance of the clearest, deepest, and liveliest convictions. The words of Thomas do not admit of doubt; they leave no room for misconstruction. They testify clearly and decidedly to the divinity of Christ, and form one of the mighty rocks on which those who will not believe Christ to have been more than man, and who even pretend that the Bible is on their side in this matter, must see their opinion totally wrecked. Many have not been ashamed to endeavor to extricate themselves from their difficulties by the absurd pretence that Thomas did not call Jesus his Lord and his God, but that, adopting the very bad practice of modern days, he, in this expression, only gave vent to his surprise at the reappearance of his Master,—as if such an abuse of the Divine name had been as general then in Judea as it is now in Europe, and as if an Israelite would not have recoiled with horror from so frivolous an abuse of the sacred name—"My Lord and my God"—as from a blasphemy which deserved stoning! But thus does God abandon those who wilfully oppose his Word, and faith in it, to the maddest, wildest conceits. Thomas had, in an unequivocal manner, done homage to the Lord Jesus as his Divine Lord, and as the heavenly King, whom all the prophets had most explicitly pointed out as the future Messiah. In his confession, Thomas most justly places the risen Savior upon the throne of the eternal Majesty, and assigns to his pierced hands the reins of universal government as belonging to him, the Lord of all. And what is our Lord's bearing when the disciple falls at his feet with this mighty testimony? Does he decline the lofty title reverentially addressed to him by the disciple as one too high, and not justly employed with reference to him? Does he recoil from the disciple who thus acknowledges him, as did Paul and Barnabas afterwards from the Lystrians, with the words, "Thomas! thou blasphemest! thy Lord and thy God is in heaven, and I, like thyself, am but his servant?" By no means. The Lord accepts the testimony in its full scope and weight, and does so with exalted calmness; nay, he even corroborates it by saying, "Now, Thomas, believest thou?" It most certainly appears that the titles Lord and God are applicable to him in their full and unimpaired import; for if it were not so, Thomas must have been mad to have bowed the knee whilst saying it; and Jesus himself would have been guilty of blasphemy, a crime punishable with death, if

receiving such homage. This is the alternative; and there remains nothing open to us more rational than to bow the knee to him also, and to unite in the reverential exclamation, *"My Lord and my God!"*

IV. Our Lord, in reply to Thomas's confession, says, *"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed!"* A reply full of meaning, but which, nevertheless, involves something that at the first glance might astonish us. Was Thomas, then, who only believed because he had seen, not blessed? Truly, indeed, we see him in an ecstasy of joy and delight at the sight of his risen Master. But the word "blessed" signifies far more than such an exhibition of rapturous joy; it indicates perfect content. Thomas was unable to perceive the real aim of Christ's incarnation, and could not appreciate what he really possessed in a living Savior. If he had understood, the sacrifice of the Mediator under the curse of the law would have appeared to him to be an indispensable requisite of the Divine work of redemption, and he would have been confident that the Lord had risen; nay, that he must live again, because it was perfectly inconceivable that God should allow the Shepherd of the sheep to be imprisoned in the tomb. The disciple would have been sure the Redeemer had risen even before he presented himself in person to him; and if Thomas had read in the healed wounds of the Messiah, as out of divinely-attested documents, the intelligence of the finished work of redemption, accomplished for his sake, he would only have rejoiced to find himself thereby strengthened in consolations. Thus, you see, had Thomas, under the circumstances suggested, believed before he saw, when faith was turned to sight, he would have been truly blessed, whereas we now see him only intoxicated with joy, and almost lost to self-possession through ecstatic emotion.

Our Lord's declaration, *"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed,"* confirms and blesses the conditions of belief which are now usual and normal, and leaves us without a motive for envying those who once saw our Lord personally and bodily living upon earth. The faith of Christians of the present day is not based upon their senses. It rests on the threefold witness of the Word, of the Holy Ghost, and of inward spiritual experience. Enlightened by the Holy Ghost, we feel ourselves to be poor sinners, needing grace, mediation, and redemption. But this need is met by the gospel message in the Savior's invitation—*"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* To see him in spirit, to hear his voice, to perceive the aim of his mission, and to feel in the inmost soul, "Thou art my Savior, or there is none," are one and the same thing. Thus do we believe *without seeing,* and that which we are permitted to behold, either in remarkable answers to prayer, or in wondrous providential aid, or even in trances and visions, we gratefully welcome as a refreshing, vivifying, and strengthening addition to our faith. But our faith is not founded upon it; it subsists without it, resting on stronger and firmer pillars.

May the Lord assist us, where the work has not already been done, to that faith which is a fruit of the right perception of that which ought to be believed! John says, *"It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."* May the deep meaning of these words of the apostle be disclosed to us all by personal experience!

THE DIVINE CHRIST.

DANIEL H. MARTIN, D.D.

What think ye of Christ?—Matt. xxii: 42.

"What think ye of Christ?" Jesus, while he lived, was accustomed to ask, "Whom do men say that I am?" There are other questions that arrest our thought, and then vanish from the mind. The question, "What think ye of Christ?" is the touchstone of character. What a man is, and what a man does, depend on his answer to this question.

I hear a certain class of men saying, "Christ was a man of consummate goodness, but he was only a man. He was the outgrowth of the ages, the flower and fruit of preceding generations; in a word, evolution accounts for Jesus."

But that answer only starts a harder question; if Jesus is the product of evolution, why is it that evolution has not continued to evolve such characters? How is it that all subsequent generations have not yet developed up to the measure of the perfect Christ? Why is it we have had no second Christ? We have had many philosophers, and many poets, and many religious teachers; we have had thousands of good men, but why only one Christ? God is good and almighty; if he could give one such man, so forceful for good in the world, what might not a multitude of Christs have accomplished? John answers the question when he says that in giving Christ to the world, God gave all he had to give of that sort, "He gave his only begotten Son."

But another class of people answer, "What think ye of Christ?" by telling us that he was a literary product, an idealized character, who, while he actually lived in Palestine, had been idealized by the evangelists, and is a mental and spiritual conception. If that were so, the evangelists would have been equal to Christ themselves. Even Theodore Parker had to confess that it would take a Jesus to forge a Jesus. Imagine unlettered fishermen and farmers accomplishing such an astonishing feat.

But there is still another class of people who answer the question by asserting that "Christ was the product of the peculiar conditions of his age. A student of prophecy, he was convinced that it was the hour to assume the claim of the Messiah. In other words, our Lord Jesus Christ was a well-meaning, good-natured impostor; that his unselfish desire was to do good, but in order to do it must assume the role of the promised Messiah." It requires more faith to believe that view, than it does to believe in the divine claim which Jesus makes. How could he be a product of his age when his age was one in which men's highest ambitions turned in the direction of military power and worldly dominion; in an era when the soldier was the ideal man, and the emperor revered as a God? This youth sought neither military glory nor political power, but dedicated his life to deeds of mercy, and became the fellow-sufferer and sympathizer with the poor and the weak.

A young man steps out of a carpenter shop in a despised village in Galilee, and announces himself as the "Son of God," and calls upon all ranks of society to accept him as the guide of their life and the Savior of their souls. He demands implicit obedience, and the sundering of every tie which interferes with it. He speaks in warning voice to all who disbelieve him, and tells them to look to him as the final Judge

of the quick and the dead. With no blush upon his cheek he announces himself the equal of God: "Before Abraham was I am." "No man hath seen God at any time except the only begotten of the Father." No wonder the Jews exclaimed, "Whence hath this man this authority?"

But the truths he spake excited even more surprise. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" they asked. "Whence hath he learned these things?" He differed from the Pharisees and the Sadducees, proclaiming his mighty truths like one who was himself a fountain of truth. He expounded the Scriptures with a wisdom superhuman. The scribes and rabbis put puzzling questions to him; but to every question he gives an immediate answer. Even our most learned judges, who have been on the bench for years, are frequently obliged to say in the presence of complicated questions: "Decision reserved." Jesus never had to say "decision reserved," but on the instant makes reply, not only so correctly, but so explicitly that his sayings have been the foundation of civil law for centuries. Not only did he utter great truths for the regulation of human conduct, truths which have entered as moulding forces into civilization, but he incarnated them into his own life, in order that the world might see a practical, living example of the power of the truth.

Where shall we classify him? He was born a Jew, and in the Orient; but what is there exclusively Jewish or Oriental about him? Born of the tribe of Judah, and having legal right to the throne of David, we would naturally expect him to share the narrow, jealous feelings of the Israelites, who were chafing under the loss of national power. No lines of Jewish heredity color his character, and no racial prejudice warps his teachings. Yet the Jews have preserved their character from the very start. One of the marvels of history is the indestructibility of the Jewish identity. Here stands this solitary figure, born of this unmingling, seclusive people, who is the most cosmopolitan character of history; teaching lessons of brotherly love, and condemning their priest and Levite for cold-heartedness, while praising the hated Samaritan. All laws of environment lose their force in him. In an age of polytheism, he worships the one true God; in an age of formalism, he finds the secret of spiritual communion; praised by adoring multitudes, he is never inflated by flattery; cursed by his enemies, he never betrays the truth; deserted by his friends, he never utters a word of resentment.

He did certain things which would have made him remembered throughout all time, even if he had not spoken any great truths. He performed wonders, he seemed to be in control of all the laws of nature, wielding them at his will. There might be some doubt about the miracles if he had performed them out of sight, and simply told people that he had performed them. But the startling fact is that he performed all those miracles, some forty of them, in broad daylight, in the presence of witnesses, and in several cases, in the presence of thousands of people. Moreover, he never failed.

And the way he did the things is as remarkable as the things themselves. Instead of his power seeming to be exhausted in the exercise of the miraculous, he constantly impresses us with the restraint of power. Attention has been called to the fact that one who could do so much, did no more. Our Lord performed only a few miracles, and these always for the good of others, never to glorify himself, or even to save himself from his enemies. Surely that was divinity. For it requires omnipotence to make such little selfish use of power. Jesus was never spectacular; the occasion was always worthy of the deed.

If it would satisfy critics to take the miracles out of the New Testament, what shall we do with the one supreme miracle of all, the character of Jesus Christ? Enemies have searched his life with flaming torches, but none of them has come back with the report that he could find any spot upon his flawless character. Skeptics have writ-

ten many folios to explain away his miracles, but they have never attempted explaining away his life. For two thousand years Jesus has lived under the electric light of investigation, and the closest examination of his life has revealed no self-seeking, covetousness, pride or evil ambition.

Jesus measured his moral strength against the severest tests. "He was tested in all points like as we are," and lays down the challenge: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" No man has ever been able to take up the gauntlet. Notice some of the tests by which Jesus sustains it.

Test the first, intimacy with friends. We have a proverb: "Familiarity breeds contempt." Intimacy reveals our weaknesses.

The very ones who knew Christ most intimately were the ones who trusted him the most, and were strongest in their assurance of his absolute sinlessness. John, leaning upon his bosom, speaks of him as "Jesus Christ, the lamb of God." The entire company of disciples who lived with him day and night for three and a half years, seeing him upon all occasions, in times of flattery, when an ordinary man might have been betrayed by pride to do some foolish thing; at times when the multitude turned their back upon him, when weakness of character would have betrayed itself in discouragement; at the time when the rulers took counsel to kill him, when disappointed ambition, if he had had it, would have filled him with dejection. So constantly did he show that serene and God-like equipoise of character under all conditions, that those twelve intimates gradually rose from the opinion that Jesus was the son of the carpenter, to the confession which burst from the lips of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

But our friends are sometimes prejudiced in our favor. Can we not get the testimony of enemies concerning the character of Christ? Enemies are apt to say what they think. Jesus lived in the blaze of publicity, and was constantly thrown among hostile critics, who regarded him as dangerous to their own interests. The Roman centurion, who superintended the crucifixion, spoke for all when he said: "Surely this was the Son of God."

Another test must be submitted, the test of conscience. We all realize the validity of this test. You never find Jesus accusing himself of wrong-doing. On the contrary, he puts the challenge: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Nothing but silence answers that challenge.

It will interest us to consider another test, the balance of virtues in Jesus' character. The best man that you and I can think of is narrowed by his individuality. In our best attempts at moral character we cannot help exemplifying one virtue at the expense of other virtues.

But you find in Jesus perfect balance of virtues—magnanimous, yet humble; firm, yet meek; dignified, yet condescending; pure, yet sympathetic with the sinful; spiritual, but never austere; always earnest, never rude; combining all temperaments, slave of none; thoughtful, never melancholy; always busy, never restless; in the midst of turmoil, peaceful; attends weddings and dinners, holds little children in his arms, caresses them, and is in full sympathy with everything tender and beautiful in human life.

Jesus established a kingdom which has outlived the kingdoms of Greece and Rome and Egypt, and his name is known and worshiped today where the names of the mightiest kings have never been heard of. How did this man do this? By shaping his doctrines to the passions and prejudices of men, as some leaders have done? Nay. In an age when there was no word for humility, Jesus exalted the poor in spirit. In an age when everybody's idea of greatness was in rising above his fellows, Jesus teaches that true greatness is childlikeness, and that the measure of a perfect man is the amount of humble services he performs for the good of others. In an age when

men considered it only just to kill their enemies, Jesus taught men to love their enemies.

Now, let him declare to us his own opinion of himself. He said: "I am the light of the world." "I am the bread of life." "I am the good shepherd." "No man cometh to the Father save through me."

Again he says: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." To the disputing Pharisees he says: "Before Abraham was I am." The expression *"I am"* we must remember was the name of God. There was but one "I am" known to those Jews to whom Christ spoke. They understood just what he meant, because they regarded him as speaking blasphemy, and took up stones to stone him. And he allowed them to interpret his words just as they received them. When they asked him point blank if he claimed to be the Son of God, he gave them the direct answer: "Thou sayest the truth." When his enemies gave the reason for his crucifixion to Pilate, they said: "Because he made himself the Son of God." In his matchless prayer with his disciples, he makes this declaration: "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He claims to be omnipresent as to place and time by the expression, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Also, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Thomas, the doubter, becoming convinced, falls at Jesus' feet and exclaims: "My Lord and my God." Jesus permitted Thomas to worship him as God, and did not rebuke him. No wonder John crowns him Creator of the universe: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made."

The climacteric proof of the divinity of Christ was his resurrection. Gilbert R. West and Lord Littleton tried to overthrow Christianity by proving that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the conversion of Paul were fictions. Mr. West chose to disprove the resurrection of Christ, and Lord Littleton the conversion of Paul. You know the result; it has been tersely said that Mr. West, in his effort to keep Christ in the grave, was himself raised from the dead, and Lord Littleton, in his attempt to prove that Paul's conversion was a myth, had the vision of himself as a sinner, and Jesus Christ a Savior. These two learned men, after their honest investigations, came together to worship him whose religion they had thought to destroy.

A present-day writer has said: "Thus far the world has discovered five men whose genius for original thinking is of the first order. But the dizzy space which separates these men from the rudest savage is not so great as the space that separates them from the Divine Carpenter. Three centuries have passed; the world's greatest poet has had twelve great students, of four nationalities, who have given us great commentaries upon Shakespeare's immortal dramas. And yet no scholar has ever felt so deeply interested in the bard of Stratford that he has gone to some province of India, or Africa, to give his beloved poet to the people, or formulate their rude speech into the written language. But during this one century alone, the intellectual stimulus of Christ's life has been such that more than two hundred dictionaries and grammars, in as many dialects and languages, have been compiled for the furtherance of Christ's thoughts, and the enrichment of men's lives."

Who shall measure the influence of his words, entering as they do into law, and literature, and life? Did he not say, "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit, they are life"? Lord Macaulay said the Sermon on the Mount was the richest passage in literature. Charles Dickens, a great artist in the portrayal of pathos, when he was asked what was the most touching story in literature, replied: "The story of the Prodigal Son." Edmund Kean, England's greatest actor, said there was one passage so full of tears that no man could properly utter it, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Charles Lamb and some of his literary friends were amusing themselves, as Hazlitt tells us, by imagining how they would act if some of the great kings of literature, who were dead, should suddenly appear before them. Charles Lamb said: "If Shakespeare should come among us, we would all rise; but if Jesus should appear, we should all kneel." And no one in that company denied it; it is the inevitable posture before the Master of our soul and our destiny.

Finally, history has placed the capstone on the monument of testimony to the divinity of Christ. Christ and Christianity began together. And the light of our present-day civilization is the light of Christianity. There is no other explanation. You can explain the pool of water in the street by the April shower, but you cannot explain Lake Erie, or Lake Superior in that way. Effects imply adequate causes; the results of a movement disclose the nature of the movement.

What then shall we do with Jesus, called the Christ? We shall crown him King of kings and Lord of lords. We adore him also for the fact that in him we have at hand the source of help for every difficulty, and every trouble, and every temptation. In him, too, we have a glimpse of the possibility of our own nature; for we are children of God, not clods of the valley. We have been put here to grow into his likeness and image. That is what a man is, power plus possibilities; nature plus nurture.

May the truth comfort us today. If any are discouraged, may the power of the Son of Mary, the Son of God, renew your life. If any are bowed down under remorse for sin, may Jesus the Savior speak forgiveness and peace to your souls. If any are weighed down under a burden of grief, may the comfort of Christ uplift and sustain you. And to every one in this work-a-day world, who is battling with temptations that seem stronger than his will, Christ can empower his will to cast out the evil spirit that prompts to sin, that Satan may lose his dominion, and a new throne be set up in the heart, and Jesus Christ be crowned King of kings, and every thought, and every imagination be brought into subjection to him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

"WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU, DO IT."

WILLIAM F. McDOWELL.

John ii: 5.

Charles Lamb and a company of friends were discussing together what they would do in the event of certain of the world's famous dead appearing suddenly in their midst. They decided that if Homer came in they would ask him in which one of those seven cities he was actually born. They would ask Shakespeare whether he wrote his own plays or whether Bacon did it. At last one said, "But suppose that Jesus Christ should enter?" Instantly, Lamb's manner changed from playfulness to seriousness. He stammered out: "That would be different. You see if Shakespeare came in we must all rise, but if He came in we must all kneel." It was the recognition of the invincible supremacy of Jesus. He is the final authority, the soul of the creed, the life of the Scriptures, the heart of the church. Matthew Arnold, great son of a greater father, poet critic, man of letters, culture incarnate, told a Philistine age that the sure way to be cultivated was to learn and follow the secret of Jesus. But that is a late echo of the open secret of Mary's early words at the marriage supper in Cana. The secret of Jesus is obedience to Jesus.

For the purpose of clearness let us group Christ's commands under three heads. There is first, the command to be.

If Christ is to be the Savior of men, he must be the Savior of the strong as well as of the weak. And he must save the whole of the strong man. No test more severe than this confronted Jesus. Let your minds run back to that first great sermon —the first Christian sermon, before there was any Christian church. What was the key note of it? What one word sums it all up as no other word does? From the first beatitude to the close of the sermon, one ideal shines steadily forth. The sermon has been called the magna charta of the kingdom of God. It seems rather the magna charta of individual character. The individual recovered his lost title deeds that day by the mountain. The men who heard it must have gone away with strange, high thoughts about themselves. Not only had a new prophet dawned upon their vision, but a new self had risen above their horizon. They had heard unfamiliar words applied to themselves. "One who was evidently God's own Son had spoken to them as if they also were God's sons." Into their ears had dropped such words as "poor in spirit," "pure in heart," "salt of the earth," "light of the world." One sentence in the sermon caught in their minds and rang through their memories like strains of music not to be forgotten—"Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Then some of them remember the words chanted in the synagogues and in the temple, "I have seen an end of all perfection." What does the young preacher mean? Has he come to mock them? No man in Christ's presence ever felt that. It was a command, to be sure, but it was a command with a promise. James Martineau said, "Jesus Christ shows us in living definition what should be our spirit and character."

He was a living definition. The people who heard him that day went to their homes feeling not only that they had been exhorted to perfection, but that they had seen it.

But there is a deeper difference between him and others. Socrates is said to have had three characteristics as a teacher, love for truth, love for pupils, and power to communicate his truth to his pupils. Superficial minds have seen in these three marks a complete characterization of Jesus. But that garment is too small for him. Love for truth, love for pupils, power to convey the truth to his pupils—all these he had. But away beyond all this he had the mysterious, supernatural power to communicate himself to them. Men not only learned his words and grasped his ideas, but were made into his likeness.

We are looking for force. We are seeking, ever striving for power. The old adage says, "Knowledge is power." Men's true sentiment is, "Money is power." Men have acquired both and have been weaker than broken reeds. Character is power. It is the unique pre-eminence of Christianity that it presents a perfect character to the world. It has a perfect body of doctrine, but its supreme mark is the perfect character of Christ. Here lodges its power over men. Christ's contemporaries and associates felt it to be so. From the day John Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb," till the day Pilate said, "Behold the Man," he exercised the sovereign sway belonging to a perfect character. He said to men, "Follow me," and they did it without question. He said to demons, "Come out," and they obeyed. He said to Satan, "Get thee behind," and he slunk away like a coward. He said to waves, "Be quiet," and they ceased to toss. He said to sick men and to dead men, "Arise," and they arose. He knew the power that belongs to a perfect character. And one day, with the shadow of the cross smiting him full in the face, he said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." And he is doing it.

You seek to be a force in the world. Not scholarship, noble as it is; not money, potent as it is; but only the Christ-like character will win for you the Christ-like power. This is the divine plan for making men of power. One man like Savonarola is worth more than an army. Livingstone walks through Africa and no hand touches him. The Christ-like man will have the Christ-like power. It belongs to the real man, not to the false. And the world waits for such leadership.

The second command of Christ is social—to love and serve. And that is the correct order. The Christ-like character does not end in itself. It works out in Christ-like service. Righteousness is holiness at work. Holiness compelled Pilate to say, "I find no fault in Him." Righteousness is this holiness girt about with a towel, washing the disciples' feet. Righteousness is holiness loving men and serving them. There is a sneer at the Christian scholar. He is said to be selfish and cowardly like other men. He sides with the strong against the weak. He hides when the great cause calls for him. Luther called Erasmus a time server and a coward. Goethe and culture are synonyms; but Theodore Parker asked in scorn what Goethe ever did for humanity. The sneer at the Christian scholar is in the air.

Sovereignty is a triple thing. Sovereignty of character, sovereignty of love, sovereignty of service. Men are afraid, scholars are afraid to be or to seem warm-hearted. But you must read Christ's words clear through. He said "be perfect," but he also said, "love one another," and dear old Saint John repeated it until the disciples wearied of it. And the heart of the world breaks for lack of love, not for lack of money nor advice. McAll went into Paris knowing two sentences in French. "God loves you; I love you." He said them over and over until men said they were true, and he became the mightiest single force in France. Love *is* the greatest thing in the world. Do not be afraid of it. The university exists to train philosophers and philanthropists—lovers of truth who shall be also lovers of men. "And having loved his own he loved them to the end." He loved actual men rather than the idealized

abstraction called man. And scholars with this spirit have not been wanting. The list begins early. The best scholar of the first century, loving logic and letters, sits down with people whom he also loved, weaves dirty haircloth for tents, saying, "The love of Christ constraineth me."

Three words we have spoken—be, love, serve. There he is, saying: "Be ye therefore perfect; love one another; the greatest of all is the servant of all." There his mother stands, saying, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

The third command of Christ is missionary, the command to go. Personal, social, missionary—these words cannot be separated. You cannot obey the first without going on to the others. The perfect character loves and serves and goes, or he would not be the perfect character. Let us cheerfully admit the splendid service rendered to mankind by the hermits and monks, but neither the hermit nor the monk is for to-day or to-morrow. St. Anthony is not so impressive a figure as Judson or Carey or Damien or Hannington. The Christian principle is an active principle. Since Christ's last command the final test of Christian character has been its disposition to go. Then you will ask in Paul's language, "What wilt thou have me to do?" For St. Paul the answer was the beasts at Ephesus, the shipwreck on the Mediterranean, the dungeon at Rome, and the martyr's crown. For the early disciples the answer was the swift, fierce blows of persecution, scattering them as sheep without a shepherd. For John Huss it was a kindled fire, a handful of ashes, and a chain hanging to the burnt stump of a stake. For Coleridge Patterson, a pure-minded Eton boy, it was the Pacific isles, death at the hands of the savages, and the body of this young English scholar-bishop "lying in an open boat, floating away over the bright blue waters, his hands crossed as if in prayer and a palm branch on his breast." For Ignatius it was the lions, for Polycarp and Savonarola the fire. For the Waldenses the answer was the dens and caves of the Alps; for Livingstone death in an African hut "to heal the open sore of the world;" for the early Methodists it was the wilderness, the hunger, the stoning, the river, the swamps, and death; for the Pilgrims, banishment, a perilous journey over raging seas, and a bleak welcome to savage tribes and frozen shores. For a hundred of you the answer will be exile and loneliness, love and service in lands where you will see no white face and hear no familiar voice save His.

It all ties itself up together into one grand motive force. Put the words together again—"Be ye therefore perfect," "Love one another," "Servant of all," "Go into all the world," "If ye love me keep my commandments," "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Such a life will not be easy, but it will be worth living. All this he bids you; and there stands his mother, saying, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

The career of the greatest Englishman of our century has just closed. The secret of his power is not his love for home, nor his matchless oratory. It is his obedience to Christ. Over the Gladstone bed has hung for half a century the motto, "Christian, remember what thou hast to do." On June 12, 1841, Charles Kingsley, a Cambridge student, wrote in his journal:—

"My birthright—I have been for the last hour on the seashore, not dreaming but thinking deeply and strongly and forming determinations which are to affect my destiny through time and through eternity. Before the sleeping earth and the sleepless sea and stars, I have devoted myself to God; a vow never (if he gives me the faith I pray for) to be recalled."

And it never was. When Hannington was ordered to Africa he said, "I could no more say no, than Gordon when he was ordered to Khartoum." These are the shining pages out of our Christian history.

Here over the altar, let us clasp hands in faithful pledge that we will listen till he speaks, and then do whatever he saith; that we will obey him by day and by night,

on land and on sea; obey him until he sits on every throne and the last man knows his name; obey him until there is no heathen world, until masters and servants, oppressors and slaves, become brethren in Him. Until then and after then, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."—Record of Christian Work.

A WARNING TO THE CHURCH.

MARK GUY PEARSE.

Quench not the Spirit.—1 Thessalonians v: 19.

We have dwelt much upon the purpose of Christ concerning the church, and the promise by which he would fulfill that purpose—*Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*

The Holy Ghost is come. But there is another and very terrible possibility; instead of our being filled with power, we may turn from all this, and *we may quench the Spirit.*

The words are to the church. We may have thought of them only as a warning to the unconverted; but if we turn to the beginning of the Epistle we find that it is written *"to the Church* which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." No people ever seemed less to need such an exhortation than these. "We give thanks to God always for you all. . . . Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." Then as he came near to the end of this letter he writes to these the words, *Quench not the Spirit.*

Is it not to the Church that the most terrible words of this book are spoken? When Jesus Christ came he had pity for the outcast; he bent over the harlots; he welcomed the prodigals; he prayed for his murderers; but there were some to whom he could only speak words of black and hopeless condemnation; and they were members of the church—the religious people—religious in their washing, religious in their dressing, religious in their looks,—yet these were the people whom Christ greeted as a generation of vipers, and himself wondered how they could escape the damnation of hell. So it was in the time of Isaiah. To the people who came to prayer, and who brought sacrifice and offered incense, God spake words of terrible reproof—"When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes; when ye make many prayers, I will not hear."

What, then! is it better to be a drunkard, a harlot, a murderer, than to be a Christian? Well, yes, it is, *unless your Christianity makes you like Jesus Christ.* The greatest responsibility in this world is the responsibility of knowing Christ.

There is no genius, no position, no gift which will ever bring upon any man such responsibility as this of knowing Christ. And now, *God holds us responsible, not for what we have, but for what we might have. Not for what we are, but for what we might be.* Jesus Christ has opened to us the kingdom of heaven, and now, if we who ought to be princes are beggars only, for us there is not pity, but sterner words of reproof than any other can know. Think how that beside us, poor, earthy, selfish, shriveled as we are, God sees that other man, the man we might be in Christ Jesus, rich with the gifts of God, strong with his strength, full of grace and truth—the Christ-

like man into which God is ever seeking to transform us. It is by God's offers and by our opportunities that we shall be judged and by which we shall be condemned.

The work of the Holy Ghost which exposes us to this peril of quenching the Spirit is manifest again and again in the Epistles of St. Paul. Turn, for instance to the Epistle written to the Ephesians. He does not once pray for them that their sins may be forgiven, but he starts from that point. "After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and love unto all the saints, I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, * * * that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." *That we may see what we may be*—that is the great work of the Holy Spirit in the church, and to lead us up to it. Of ourselves we are apt to make the hope of our calling a poor thing—an escape, not from ill-temper and selfishness and indolence and pride, but only an escape from hell; not a power which is to make us like God and ready for his service, but only to take us to heaven when we die. To be content with religion without Christ-likeness, is that which is so terribly denounced by the Lord Jesus. Now the Holy Spirit is come to open up to us glorious possibilities. What we will make of all these revelations and promptings depends upon ourselves. We may give ourselves up to the Spirit's leadings, and then, *then only,* are we the sons of God. He will not drag us; he will not force us; but if we are willing to go with him, then shall he bring us into the large and wealthy place. Or we may hear of these things, and be content with vague wishes and idle dreams, and live with but bare memories of what was begun in us, the great possibilities of God's grace all unknown; the Guide with his holy promptings withdrawn, the Spirit quenched.

Let us rouse ourselves to ask very earnestly—How may we quench the Spirit?

It is startling to find the suggestion which immediately follows these words—*Despise not prophesyings.* We feel at once that nothing could be so certain to quench the Spirit as the spirit of scorn. Of the three steps downward to perdition—neglecting, rejecting, *despising*—the last is indeed the last; beyond it can only be the blackness of darkness.

Even as there is no surer way of putting out a fire than by pouring cold water upon it, so is there no surer way of quenching the Spirit than by rejecting and despising his revelations and promptings. Yet it is a fact, strange indeed, yet constantly noticeable, that whilst the only religion which the world believes in at all is a life of complete consecration to God, yet the advocacy of such a life often moves the scorn of the church.

Holiness is sneered at as a sentimental dream or a hobby. My brother, is it not much more likely that the Blessed Spirit is in the voice which urges us to get nearer to God and to be more like him, than in the voice which bids us not to trouble about these things, and to be content as we are? God hath called us, and is calling us, unto holiness; he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God.

Or again, the Holy Spirit may set before us these further possibilities of grace, the richer things of the gospel; and many at once begin to associate them with the failings of some unhappy professor.

Well, is not that the reason for which the world rejects the gospel of God's grace? And we know that none can avoid the terrible responsibility of rejecting the gospel by any such excuses. He that despiseth extends his scorn to God who hath called. There is a flippant and scornful way in which many people turn from the subject, saying—*"I don't believe in perfection, you know."* Well, if we believe in imperfection, depend upon it, according to our faith it shall be unto us. But what is the degree of imperfection which the church tolerates? This man says he is a Christian, and he is proud and harsh, and you think that a man who is a member of the church ought to be very different. Why? You don't believe in perfection. *Ah, but you do*—everybody

does—*when it applies to other people.* It is only as a cloak and apology for our own failings that we keep these convenient limits of our creeds.

There is but one way of safety for us; it is to give ourselves up to the claims of God in Jesus Christ, and to the power of his grace, saying and praying, "O Lord, save me as far as thou canst, and when thou canst save me no further, *then,* and then only, will I be content to wait."

"He that rejecteth"—"Quench not the Spirit"—"Despise not." The words set vividly before us the figure of Esau, who despised his birthright. For a present and passing indulgence he let go the golden future and all its glory and high privilege. This is the way in which the church most frequently and most terribly quenches the Spirit—*despising the calling of God.* When these great purposes of Christ are heard they kindle no desire, they are not met by any ambition to be Christlike. We profess to be Christ's soldiers and servants, purchased by his blood and going onward into his presence; yet we do not make his service the great purpose of our lives; we do not surrender everything to it. Is not this to despise our calling and to quench the Spirit? When society, gain, honor, position, pleasures the most trivial, have more charm for us than the presence and good pleasure of our Savior Jesus Christ—is not that to despise our birthright, and to be like Esau of old?

Another way of putting out the fire of God and quenching the Spirit is to let it alone.

The gracious Spirit of God has revealed something of our high calling, and many listen, content idly to sigh after it. They talk of their desires, and how they long for these things, as if wishes were virtues. The laziest men are generally richest in desires; they have so much time for wishes, and it takes so little trouble. It is not an accident that makes the proverb associate the folly of wishes with idle beggars. There is no more miserable way of cheating the soul than contenting ourselves with desire. "We can truly say that we do earnestly desire." Well, what of that! I doubt not that the place richest in good desires is a convict establishment, where everybody devoutly wishes that he had never got in, and devoutly desires that he could get out. There is nothing promised to wishes. Seek, and ye shall find; ask, and it shall be given; knock, and it shall be opened. Seeking, expecting, claiming, these are the steps up to possession.

Yet, again, we often put out the fire of God *with shovelfuls of rubbish.*

There are some fires that cold water will not put out, only ashes or dust will avail. Ah! how carefully and utterly do many thus destroy all holy influence and all the promises of God! They have heard these promises and invitations, and then they turn away, saying, "Well, you know, I am not like other people. I am very peculiar; I do not understand, or I can not feel." And they pile up the list of their complaints and failings, and they put the fire out. O, this dreadful rubbish! Our weakness, our folly, our peculiarities, are no hindrances to him, and the greater the hindrances are to us, the more reason there is that we should come to God for help. It is an insult, indeed, a sin and a shame, when the Holy Spirit of God comes to lead us on to these higher things, that we should limit his grace and power by our failings and weaknesses. He is come to help such foolish and weak ones as ourselves. No wonder the Holy Spirit is grieved, insulted, quenched.

And not content with this, such offenders generally get more of this same rubbish from their *circumstances,* which also are very peculiar. For others it is easy, of course; but for any one who is tempted and tried as they are! Then they carefully collect all their worries and difficulties and keep piling them up until the fire is utterly put out.

Are you where God would have you to be? If not, come out, and right away at once; for you certainly ought not to be there. If you are, then be afraid to complain

of circumstances which God has ordained on purpose to work out in you the very image and likeness of his Son.

There is no resting-place between these two—the great purpose of God fulfilled; the Holy Ghost received by us, and we made witnesses unto Christ, or the Holy Spirit quenched. The words come to us from God; let them arouse and alarm and urge us to the full surrender of ourselves to him. *Quench not the Spirit.*

"DECISION FOR CHRIST."

JOHN McNEIL.

Luke ix: 57-62.

I would like briefly to sound these three notes of decision. I want to speak a little about these three candidates for the Kingdom.

Some one has called the first man the man who represents the people too quick—the impulsive, outspoken people with their drawbacks. The second man represents the people who are too slow. The man with the good excuse had to go and bury his father first, and maybe after that never came at all; and the third man represents the people who are too soft. Too impulsive, too slow, too soft! Well, that sums us all up pretty well. Some of us too quick. Some of us are too quick with the tongue. Many people are good on singing and praying. Too quick, and not enough of *doing* the thing. And some of us, too slow, having too little concentration, never coming really to the fixed point for Christ. Now and then, others of us too soft, not willing to bear the wrench. There are kindly, affectionate people all round about us concerning whom we indistinctly feel that if we gave heart and life to Jesus we may have to part with, and they are very nice people and very lovely people, and we don't care for that sacrifice. We belong to that tribe of Indians called "Tender-foot Indians," a very large tribe, and lots of white people among them. Afraid of bearing the cross. Afraid of being called extreme and fanatical. One must become flint to smite his passage through a cross-grained world, for the moment his face is set toward Emmanuel's land the very air begins to stiffen with opposition.

Now, let us sound this three-chorded string of harps. First of all, the first man. Suppose we just take him for the impulsive Peter.

This man came up and said, "Lord, I will follow thee, whithersoever thou goest." The warm, impulsive-hearted man. How did Jesus treat him?

The second man needed to be dug out. The first man comes up of his own thought He says, virtually, Lord, I have seen thee before. I have heard thy words, and, happening to meet thee, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." What did Jesus say? Jesus said just the kindly thing. If the man were a humbug, with a thin dressing of zeal, what Jesus said would find him out to himself and drive him off; but if he, with many drawbacks belonging to his temperament, really meant it, what Christ said would deepen him, would correct and adjust his focus and just be the means to help this "lame dog over stiles." "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Humanly speaking, to-night, I don't

know where I am to get my supper and my bed; will you go now? Men and women, is a leader like that liable to be overburdened with followers in America or Great Britain, or in any land under the sun? I think Jesus said the wisest thing.

I speak to-night to those of you who are undecided, although you have played 'round about Christ and his church for a life-time, but you haven't crossed the line yet. My dear friend, what Christ means is this: Jesus will take no warm-blooded, sanguine temperament at a disadvantage. He will run the risk with you of telling you the worst first, of being honest with you. I say he will take no advantage of emotional people and warm-blooded people. In the great day no soul will be able to meet Jesus and say: Lord, I met thee on earth in the morning of my day when my heart was young; I was duped. No soul will ever be able to say that to Jesus. Blessed be his name, he tells us the worst first; and, glory to his name, there is no worst in it. It is glory to follow Jesus. America knows that, England knows that, Scotland knows that, and in my own native land the kindled fires and the crackling flames testified to this. Surely that is following Jesus; and then, even then those at the stake sounded his praise and counted it all gain to lose this life itself that they might follow Jesus through ignominy, loss and shame, and death itself.

My dear, undecided people, listen; it is nothing to Jesus Christ to count names on the communion rolls; if he doesn't count hearts he counts nothing. Give him your heart, and you strike the right road; you have got into his hands.

"I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." After all, what is the use of being down on this fellow because he was so outspoken? To put your hand into the precious hand of a waiting Savior springs from the finest impulse that ever entered the human soul. My dear friend, yield to this impulse; you will never rue it. If such an impulse is in your soul to-night, close with Christ. If the Lord refused to take impulsive and rash people and very unwise people he never would have taken Simon Peter. If the Lord would not take people who say to-day, "I will follow thee," and then deny with oaths and curses that they ever knew him, he never would have taken Simon Peter, but we are all agreed to-day that Jesus made no mistake in his man when he chose Simon Peter.

What are we going to do with Christ? He is face to face with us. After all, I can command no better words than the words of this man: "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

As often as I read the story I feel that there is a blank space. What did the man say next? I notice the final word of the man is not stated. But what is his decision? It is that which is waited for in the blank space. I trust this man pulled himself together for a moment and said: "Lord, I thank thee for being so frank with me; maybe I was tempted with ambitions, but, 'Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.'" Only the second time he said it; I hope he said it a little lower; a little less of "I" and more of "thee."

I pass to the second man. He is the slow man. Jesus meets him, knows him, had maybe seen him often before. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." He needed a personal call; the first man didn't. "Follow me." And what was the answer? "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Now, men and women, with all the first man's drawbacks from impulsiveness he isn't so dangerous as the second man. He is the man that loads up our churches and he hasn't yet settled his account with Christ. Do you see how he puts it, and it is very plausible: "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Whatever you say about the first man, the second man is wrong, absolutely wrong. What does he say? "Lord, suffer *me* first." You first and the Lord next. You people who are going on first, and the Lord, as you think, coming after you, I would advise you to look around; he isn't there. You have been duped by the devil.

"Lord, suffer me first." You know the kind of man. I call this man "Mr. I am

Coming, But—" He comes to no decision with any blood heat. And there is "Mrs. I am Coming, But—" Young man, "I am Coming, But—" and young lady, "I am Coming, But—" Watch them closely and you will never find them in the firing line. They are the heartbreak of the minister when he is an earnest man, as often he is.

"Suffer me first to go and bury my father." My dear friends, you know quite well that a funeral and a call to Christ often come together. God is sometimes sharp and sudden on people who are never performing.

Don't you see the Lord wanted this man to come for personal salvation, but back of that for special service. It was a time when every tongue was needed to set up Christ's cause. At the sound of the preaching of this gospel I have seen the dead come out of the graves of lusts; out of the whited sepulchers of mere name and form and pretense in religion; out of the graves of worldliness and money-making to walk before God and men in newness of life as much as ever Lazarus did, who was raised from the tomb.

Just a word on the last man. He comes up and says: "Lord, I will follow thee." But, he is first cousin to the other fellow. They are a dismal tribe, those "Coming Buts." "I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." I have more excuse for this man than the other man. You never will have any quarrel with your dead father for not going to his funeral. But, my dear friends, this man has the living to reckon with. I have far more sympathy with this man's difficulty than the other man's. "Lord, suffer me to bid them farewell." I was always a mother's bairn myself. Heaven holds among some of its charms this dear desire, that we shall get back to the dear old apron strings again. "Suffer me first to go and bid them farewell." If it was only to kiss his mother, I wouldn't call him a "softy" for that. He was miscalculating the power of the pull at home against Jesus, and Jesus wanted him to come away at once while he was tender. I think I see the Lord allowing him to go. He is off and says to his mother, I am going to give my heart to one who is our Messiah. But she would say: "My son, will you disgrace us before the elders of Israel?" And you know what the end would be, with his father hanging on him, and his mother, and his brothers, and his sisters. And the end would be that he would say: "I will stay with you to-night, and to-morrow we will see about it." But to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow would pass away and he would not go.

If I speak to any undecided ones to-night, now don't wait until you go home, accept Him now, and he will go home with you. Of course, it may be that you have the advantage of a Christian home. It is my pride that I am the son of parents passed into the skies. God be praised for those old folks, the aristocracy of heaven, for they were true to Jesus, and they brought us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I speak now to us all, and I speak to my own heart. Let us put Him first. Ah, brother preacher, even with us things come in between. If it is only something as thin as a sheet of tissue paper, if it is between you and Christ, it is sapping the love away.

Break every tender tie; Jesus is mine.
Tempt not my soul away; Jesus is mine.
Perishing things of clay, born but for life's day,
Pass from my soul away; Jesus is mine.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

WM. MORLEY PUNSHON.

And this voice, which came from Heaven, we heard when we were with Him in the Holy Mount.—II. Peter i: 18.

The Apostle is writing to the churches at a time when scoffers had begun to cavil against the truth, and when a swarm of false teachers had put the faith of believers in peril. He encourages their endangered confidence by reminding them of the evidences of Christianity; evidences of which he had a right to testify, for he "could not but speak which he had heard and seen." One of the chosen witnesses to the Lord's Transfiguration won early the crown of martyrdom; but the two survivors both allude to that wondrous scene, which they used to strengthen the confidence of others while it had fastened itself upon their own minds, at once an inner strength and an indelible memory. Peter speaks of it in the text as the best possible proof to him that he had not followed a "cunningly devised fable." John tells us that "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Stand with me upon the Holy Mount, let us inquire:

1st. What are *the circumstances?*

2nd. What are *the purposes* of the Transfiguration of Christ?

The second year of that loving and instructive ministry is now drawing to a close. Already have the miracles been multiplied, and the faith of the disciples has expressed itself in the confession of Peter. They are prepared to believe in Him as the Christ, though they are yet intensely Jewish in their ambition for a temporal kingdom. It is time now that their faith should enter upon its higher education, and that they should be fitted for their work of witness-bearing by the study of the mystery of suffering. Hence it is with the first intimation of the coming trouble that the narrative of the Transfiguration properly begins. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." About six days "after these sayings," when time had been given for them to sink deeply into the hearts which had doubtless been perplexed concerning them, Jesus takes Peter and James and John to be the sharers of his hours of midnight prayer. They wend their way together to the "high mountain apart," where he was accustomed to commune with his Father. While he prays the fashion of his countenance is changed. For once they "see him as he is,"—"the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person,"—and they wonder at the awful grandeur of the Divinity which the Man of Sorrows possessed, but which he had veiled even from their vision until now. And see! there are two forms whom, by some instinct or instruction, they know to be Moses and Elias. They speak, and the disciples listen in a sort of sorrowful trance, for the talk is of some "accomplished decease." They are startled by the sound, and are willingly "slow of heart to comprehend." And now there encompasses them a luminous cloud, and from the midst of it an authoritative voice speaks, attesting the Divine Sonship and Mission of the Master whom they loved so well. These poor

frail mortals faint beneath the privilege which has so highly favored them, and when they recover from their swoon of awe the dazzling vision has vanished; there is nothing living but themselves—themselves and "Jesus only." By and by they descend and rejoin their fellows, but it with a great secret in their hearts, which they were straightly charged to conceal, except in the contingency, whose remoteness would seem to them almost as an everlasting seal, "until the Son of Man be risen from the dead."

"He took Peter and James and John." There seem to have been distinctions among the Apostolic band, although the Savior had said "All ye are brethren." These three would appear to have been the innermost circle round the Lord; the nearest in intimacy; the most favored in fellowship; the chosen to testify any special revelation of his love. If the first power of Christ over death is to be displayed in the weeping household of the ruler of the synagogue, whose little daughter had faded into the beauty of the tomb, Peter and James and John must be the only witnesses of her miraculous recovery. If there is to be a revelation of "God manifest in the flesh" on the Mount, or a mysterious burst of more than mortal agony in the Garden, the same witnesses must watch until their eyelids droop and close, wearied with the twin excitements of the joy and sorrow. If great truths are to be proclaimed in the hearing of the nations, who so fitting to declare them as those "first three," he, the Man of Rock, and they, the Sons of Thunder? If every variety of character is to be joined in "bearing witness" to the truth, you secure constancy in the person of the earliest apostolic martyr, fearless and ardent advocacy in the impetuous Peter, and intelligent affection in the "disciple whom Jesus loved."

"And there appeared unto them Moses, and Elias talking with him." These are the parties summoned to this solemn mountain conference; representatives from the invisible world, whose constituency were "the law and the prophets." Moses and Elias —the one girt with the awful honors of Sinai, the other bright with the remembered triumph of Carmel. Moses and Elias—the one, whose death was hastened on account of sin, but over whose dying death had no cause to rejoice, for he had a God-prepared sepulchre and a divinely ordered funeral; the other, whom God summoned in such haste that he had no time to die, and went off to heaven, as kings travel home, with the "chariots and horsemen of Israel."

"Talking with him;" not living upon earth; and yet consciously and happily alive; bright strangers from the spirit-world, who had risen to tell the living that the dead *can* rise.

And what shall be their theme when they converse together? They spake of his decease, which "He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Their interest centered on that coming Agony and on that lifted Cross. Their highest topic was the topic of Redemption. These glorified ones desired to look into the fellowship and the mystery of the Cross. This was their chiefest interest and their grandest contemplation; this, which believers on earth rejoice in with exceeding joy; this, upon which, alas! sinners trample, and "account it an accursed thing."

"And he was transfigured before them." It has been well observed that this was *not* the Transfiguration: the Mount but showed him as he was—the actual Transfiguration was in the humilation of the incarnate life. He, essentially glorious, was "transfigured" into poverty and shame. But now, lest any lingering doubt should lurk in the minds of the Apostles, which might make their future utterances falter, they see his glory; they had suspected it before. There was a heavenliness in his teaching, and a luster from his miracles, and a brightness in his spotless life, which, amid the meanness, had betrayed the God; but here the inner Divinity shines forth through its fleshly covering.

But it is time, secondly, that we inquire into *the purposes* of the Transfiguration.

What were the designs for which it was arranged, and the lessons which it was intended to impress?

The first and great design, as we have already intimated, was *the solemn inauguration of Christ as the supreme lawgiver in his church.* This was the "honor and glory" which he received of the Father, as the Apostle distinctly declares. The exposition of the whole transaction, then, is in "the voice from heaven." After Moses had received his commission he prophesied of a greater than himself: "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken," and on this solemn occasion was the promise fulfilled. If you keep this idea in mind you will see the fitness of the appearance of Moses and Elias, rather than any other of the old Testament saints. They were the representatives of the law and the prophets; the two great authorities of the Jewish Church; the rigid jurists who upheld, in all its strictness, the rubrical exactitude of the law. There was strong contention among the early Church, many of whose members believed that the ceremonial and moral laws should be of equal force for ever; and the Apostles, in the First Council, were called to legislate on matters affecting the church's spiritual freedom from the yoke of ancient observance. Now, unless there had been some formal abrogation of authority, the laws of Moses, which God had solemnly enjoined, and to the violation of which he had annexed heavy penalties, must have continued in force. But only he who anointed the lawgiver could supersede him. The same authority which enacted the law must be the power to revoke its provisions. This authority was here given—given in the presence of the man by whose lips the former law was spoken, and of the man by whom it was championed, when degenerate Israel had forgotten it. The servants were henceforth to stand aside. They had done their work, and done it well; but they were not needed now, and on the crest of the mountain they were to render up their commission to the Son. In the last chapter of Malachi they appear, Moses and Elias, closing up the old covenant. In the 17th of Matthew they appear at the instalment of the new.

The conclusion of the marvelous scene is like the last stamp of the signet-ring, sealing and confirming the whole. When the fainting disciples recovered consciousness and looked around, "they saw no man, save Jesus only." Moses and Elias had been aforetime the objects of their devoutest reverence—the recognized teachers whom they felt themselves bound to follow. Where are they now? They have renounced all claims to empire. There is but one royal lawgiver. "Jesus only" reigning in unchallenged and sole lordship over each heart and mind. Brethren, for us as well as for them was this solemn instalment given. Christ is the lawgiver to his church for all time. Prophets and Apostles—they are valuable to us only as they repeat the words of Christ. Holy men and confessors! We accept them only as they are embodiments of the words of Jesus. "Jesus only,"—no surrender of personal thought and freedom; no binding of the conscience with the scorpion yoke of a consistory, or at the bidding of a man who "as God sitteth in the temple of God." "Jesus only!" Then rejoice, believers, in your freedom, and in all matters of perplexed mediation "appeal" directly "unto Cæsar." Look for ever into this "perfect law of liberty," that you may be blessed in your deed. Our souls exult to feel and to proclaim that there is but one authoritative teacher; we see "no man save Jesus only."

We cannot help thinking, however, that the Transfiguration must be regarded also as *the solemn baptism of the Savior into his priestly and mediatorial office.*

The great purpose of the Incarnation, as you are aware, was the offering upon the Cross. They who do not keep this in mind fall grievously short in their comprehension of the mystery. It is not enough to explain the Incarnation as designed only for the spiritual teaching, or for the loving miracles, or the exhibition of the illustrious and perfect pattern. These were all collateral and subsidiary. They are not unim-

portant, any of them. It is necessary that we should learn God's will from lips that are authorized to declare it. It is necessary that that will should be authenticated by signs following. It is necessary that we should see humanity uniform and consistent in its bright obedience. But the teaching was glorified by the dying, and the miracles were the smaller illustrations of that mercy whose crowning act was the draining of its own heart in sacrifice, and the obedience was an "obedience unto death."

The inner connection between the first announcement of the sufferings and the more formal consecration to them on the summit of this mountain is preserved by St. Luke, who tells us that it was about "an eight days after these sayings," that is, six days intervening, one on which the sayings were spoken and one on which the Transfiguration took place—"about an eight days *after these sayings*" that he went up into the Mount to pray. This was, so to speak, the meridian of his incarnate day. His sun began after this to go down towards the clouds, which awaited its setting. The first shadow of his approaching suffering now darkened upon the sky.

It will not be uninteresting to remember the history of the three heavenly voices of which we read in the lifetime of Jesus. The first voice spake at Christ's baptism, when he was baptized by John in Jordan, "to fulfill all righteousness." But the significance of the act would not be completely discerned if you exclude the prophetical character—if you do not recognize that there is a reference to that other baptism, that baptism of agony and blood.

Now it was at this first anointing of the person of Jesus that the voice from heaven spake, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The last occasion on which the voice spake was when Christ had entered upon his passion, and felt already the sharpness of its mental anguish: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, " I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Midway between these voices spake the one upon the Holy Mount.

Not only, therefore, do we witness on the Holy Mount the installation of the royal lawgiver, but of the great high-priest. It is a grand valedictory service in which he is re-ordained to duty—as the banners are blessed before the army marches to the field. With what reverence, brethren, should we, sinners, look upon the scene! As we see him standing alone upon the mountain—fresh from his ordination of glory—calm, and kingly in his heaven-imparted strength; and then as we see him, with firm step, treading the dark avenue which, through desertion, agony, insult, abandonment, terminates in his death upon the Cross—surely our distrust should vanish, and in reliance upon such a champion we should have "joy in believing." Surely our indignation against the vile sin which made all this suffering necessary should be roused within us. Surely our hearts should bound with a fervor of devotion and gratitude which the obedience of a life-time can only inadequately express.

Our aim has been to elicit the meaning of the great event before us, if haply some of its thoughts may linger in our hearts. We can but suggest how we might learn much of collateral instruction and blessing.

We might learn the immortality of the soul, from the real appearance of two men, who had long ceased to be inhabitants of earth. We might learn the conscious existence of the spirit after its separation from the body, that it does not sleep but is possessed of intellectual vigor, and, in the case of the righteous, of a residence in glory. We might learn that Christ crucified is the grand theme of contemplation and converse, both to believing hearts on earth and to the ransomed spirits of the sky. We might learn that God prepares for coming trial by special manifestations of his favor, and that though we may "fear" as we "enter into the cloud," we shall come out of it with manlier hearts and truer courage. Those who are not partakers of

Christ, might learn the value of that Divine communion from which they exclude themselves. Those who have believed, and rejoice in mountain fellowship with Jesus, might learn that we must not "build our tabernacles there." In the valley below there is work for us to do, and we must hear our Master's voice as he asks us to descend and leads us down into the great field of toil and travail and triumph.

STRUGGLING AND SEEKING.

ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D. D.

The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good.—Psalm xxxiv: 10.

If we may trust the superscription of this Psalm, it was written by David at one of the very darkest days of his wanderings, probably in the cave of Adullam, where he had gathered around him a band of outlaws, and was living, to all appearance, a life uncommonly like that of a brigand chief in the hills. One might have pardoned him if, at such a moment, some cloud of doubt or despondency had crept over his soul. But instead of that his words are running over with gladness, and the Psalm begins, "I will bless the Lord at all times, and his praise shall continually be in my mouth." Similarly here he avers, even at a moment when he wanted a great deal of what the world calls "good," that "they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." There were lions in Palestine in David's time. Very likely they were prowling about the rocky mouth of the cave, and he weaves their howls into his Psalm: "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good."

So, then, here are the two thoughts—the struggle that always fails and the seeking that always finds.

I.—The struggle that always fails.—"The young lions do lack and suffer hunger." They are taken as the type of violent effort and struggle, but "they lack and suffer hunger." The suggestion is, that the men whose lives are one long fight to appropriate to themselves more and more of outward good, are living a kind of life that is fitter for beasts than for men. A fierce struggle for material good is the true description of the sort of life that hosts of us live. What is the meaning of all this cry that we hear about the murderous competition going on around us? What is the true character of the lives of people in a city, but a fight and a struggle, a desire to have, and a failure to obtain? Let us remember that that sort of existence is for the brutes, and that there is a better way of getting what is good; the only fit way for man. Beasts of prey, naturalists tell us, are always lean. It is the graminivorous order that meekly and peacefully crop the pastures, that are well fed and in good condition—"which things are an allegory."

"The young lions do lack and suffer hunger"—and that just states the fact to which every man's experience, and the observation of every man that has an eye in his head, distinctly says, "Amen, it is so." For there is no satisfaction or success ever to be won by this way of fighting, and struggling, and scheming, and springing at the

prey. For if we do not utterly fail, which is the lot of so many of us, still partial success has little power of bringing perfect satisfaction to a human spirit.

In every way it is true that the little annoyances, like a grain of dust in a sensitive eye, take all the sweetness out of mere material good. And I suppose that there are no more bitterly disappointed men in this world than the perfectly "successful men," as the world counts them. They have been disillusioned in the process of acquirement.

You remember the old story of the Arabian Nights, about the wonderful palace that was built by magic, full of treasures, but an enemy looked on all the wealth and suggested a previously unnoticed defect by saying, "You have not a roc's egg." The owner had never thought about getting a roc's egg, and did not know what it was. But the consciousness of something lacking had been roused, and it marred his enjoyment of what he had, and drove him to set out on his travels to secure the missing thing. There is always something lacking, for our desires grow far faster than their satisfactions, and the more we have the wider our longing reaches out, so that as the wise old Book has it, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase." You cannot fill a soul with the whole universe, if you do not put God in it. The greatest work of fiction of modern times, as I take it, ends, or all but ends, with a sentence something like this, "Ah! who of us has what he wanted, or, having it, is satisfied?" "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger"—and the struggle always fails—"but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

II. The seeking which always finds.—Now, how do we "seek the Lord?" It is a metaphorical expression, of course, which needs to be carefully interpreted in order not to lead us into a great mistake. We do not seek him as if he had not sought us, or was hiding from us. It is a short search that the child by her mother's skirts, or her father's side, has to make for mother or father. It is a shorter search that we have to make for God.

We seek him by desire. Do you want him? A great many of us do not. We seek him by such a turning of thought to him, as will prevent our most earnest working upon things material from descending to the likeness of the lions' fighting for it. We seek him by desire, by communion, by obedience. And they who thus seek him find him in the act of seeking him, just as certainly as if I open my eye I see the light. For he is always seeking us. That is a beautiful word of our Lord's to which we do not always attach all its value. "The Father seeketh such to worship him." Why put the emphasis upon the "such," as if it were a definition of the only kind of acceptable worship? It is that. But we might put more emphasis on the "seeketh" without spoiling the logic of the sentence; and thereby we should come nearer the truth of what God's heart to us is.

So that if we do seek him we shall surely find. In this region, there is no search that is vain, there is no desire unaccomplished, there is no failure possible. We each of us have, accurately and precisely, as much of God as we desire to have. If there is only a very little of the Water of Life in our vessels it is because we did not care to possess any more. "Seek, and ye shall find."

We shall be sure to find everything in God. Look at the grand confidence, and the utterance of a life's experience in these great words: "Shall not want any good." For God is everything to us, and everything else is nothing; and it is the presence of God in anything that makes it truly able to satisfy our desires. Human love, sweet and precious, dearest and best of all earthly possessions as it is, fails to fill a heart unless the love grasps God as well as the beloved dying creature. And so with regard to all other things. They are good when God is in them, and they are ours in God. They are naught when wrenched away from him. Whatever is my need the one God will supply it all.

You remember the old Rabbinical tradition which speaks a deep truth, dressed in a fanciful shape. It says that the manna in the wilderness tasted to every man in the wilderness just what he desired, of whatever dainty or nutriment he was most wishful; that the manna became like the magic cup in the old fairy legends, out of which could be poured any precious liquor at the pleasure of the man who was to drink it. The one God is everything to us all, anything that we desire, and the thing that we need. "Seek ye first the kingdom . . . and all these things shall be added unto you."

Let us begin, dear brethren, with seeking, and then the struggling will not be violent, nor self-willed, nor will it fail. If we begin with seeking, and have God, be sure that all that we need we shall get, and that what we do not get we do not need. It is hard to believe it when our vehement wishes go out to something that his serene wisdom does not send. It is hard to believe it when our bleeding hearts are being wrenched away from something around which they have clung. But it is true for all that. And he that can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire but thee," will find that the things which he enjoys in subordination to his one supreme good are a thousand times more precious when they are regarded as second than they ever could be when our folly tried to make them first.

Now, all that is very old-fashioned, threadbare truth. Dear brethren, if we believed it, and lived by it, "the peace of God which passes understanding" would "keep our hearts and minds." And instead of fighting and losing, and desiring to have and howling out because we cannot obtain, we should patiently wait before him, submissively ask, earnestly seek, immediately find, and always possess, and be satisfied with the one good for the body, soul and spirit, which is God himself.

"There be many that cry, Oh, that one would show me any good." The wise do not cry to men, but pray to God. "Lord! lift thou the light of thy countenance upon me."

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

EDWARD PAYSON.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: even so. Amen.—Revelation i:7.

An apostle, speaking of the Lord's supper, intimates that the church will continue to partake of it, and, by partaking of it, to show forth his death until he shall come again. This ordinance, then, may be considered as a chain, which connects the first and the second coming of Christ. If we look back we see Christ at his table, surrounded by a little and despised band of disciples. If we look forward we see him on the judgment-seat, surrounded by all the glories and hosts of the celestial world. If we look at its commencement, we see him expiring on the cross; if we look at its termination, we see him coming in the clouds of heaven. It is this coming of which the beloved disciple speaks in our text.

In this passage there are three things which deserve our attention: The *coming* of

Christ; his being *seen by all,* and the *manner in which different characters will be affected by the sight.*

I. Let me lead your attention to the coming of Christ itself. Behold he cometh with clouds. Of the greatness, the importance of this event I shall say nothing. Every one must perceive at once, that, if we except the first coming of Christ to die for the world, inspiration has revealed no fact more momentous and interesting than that of his second coming to judge the world. For evidence of its certainty we must look to the scriptures alone: for it is a fact, which lies far beyond the ken of human reason; a fact, which God alone could reveal. Reason might venture to expect, that, if God thought proper to reveal a fact of such momentous interest, he would reveal it clearly, and with a frequency of repetition proportionate to its importance. In this expectation she would not be disappointed. There is perhaps no event, yet future, which is revealed so clearly, or in so many different passages as this. And in revealing it, the spirit of God seems to have chosen only the plainest and most simple language. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, and his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. Such is the language of inspired men. Equally explicit is the testimony of angels. This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Still more explicit, if possible is the language of our Savior himself. The Son of man, says he, shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations. And again, Ye shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. After Jesus had been apprehended by the Jews, the high priest, finding that he made no reply to their false accusations, said to him, I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. This, according to the customs of the Jews, was equivalent to the administration of an oath. And our Savior's answer was equivalent to an answer given upon oath. And what was that answer? I am: and hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. On hearing this testimony from his lips, we may reply with the high priest, though in a different sense, What need have we of any further witness? we have heard from his own mouth.

II. The next particular which claims attention is, that Jesus Christ, at his second coming, shall be seen by all mankind. Every eye shall see him. This assertion teaches us, that he will come in a visible form; for though the word see, when used alone, often signifies merely to perceive, yet it never, so far as I recollect, has this signification when used in connection with the eye. The mind may be said to see or perceive things which are in their very nature invisible; but the eye can see nothing which is not visible. And as Jesus Christ will come in a visible form, so he will come, doubtless, in a human form. He will come arrayed with that glorious body, which, as another inspired passage informs us, he now wears in heaven. Our Savior says, Ye shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven; an expression which must mean, if it means anything, that he will come in his human nature. The declaration of the angels is of the same import. Ye shall see this same Jesus come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. But they saw him ascend to heaven in a human form; they will, therefore, see him coming in a human form. The language of St. Paul is, if possible, still more decisive. God, says he, hath appointed a day, in the which he will

judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given assurance to all men, by raising him from the dead. At the same time we are assured that God is Judge himself. And St. John says, I saw the dead small and great stand before God. These otherwise contradictory passages will appear perfectly reconciled, if we recollect, that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh, God and man united in one person. His glorified body will be the temple in which God will come to judgment, and will be visible. Of its appearance we may, perhaps, form some idea from the description given by Daniel and St. John. Similar was his appearance on the mount of transfiguration, when his human form assumed some of that glory which it was destined to wear after his exaltation to heaven; a glory which will be, doubtless, increased in a degree that is inconceivable, when he shall come, not in his own glory only, but in that of his Father. Of this glory the sublime language of St. John is suited to give the most exalted conception. But the assertion in our text teaches us that Jesus Christ will come in a visible form, and that all mankind shall behold him in this form. And if he comes in a visible form, and all are assembled before him, all must, of course, see him. Let every one say to himself, *I* shall see this great sight. *I* shall see the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Savior, the Judge, of whom I have heard so much.

III. Let us attend to the manner in which different characters will be affected by this sight. All will not contemplate this spectacle with similar feelings. The feelings, with which men regard any object, will ever correspond with their own character. We know that even now men regard Jesus Christ, his word, his institutions, his friends, with opposite feelings. We know that the thoughts of his second coming affect different persons in a very different manner. Some desire it, others dread it; some think of it with pleasure, others with pain. The scriptures teach us, first, that all good men desire this event, and will contemplate it with the most joyful emotions. This is intimated in our text, where the inspired writer, after predicting Christ's coming, and his being seen by every eye, adds, Even so: Amen,—that is, so let it be; let the event take place, as soon as God pleases. In thus expressing his own felings, he expressed the feelings of all who, like himself, are faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul informs us, that the righteous Judge will, at the last day, give a crown of righteousness to all who *love* his appearing. In another passage, after predicting the second coming of Christ, he adds, "wherefore beloved, comfort ye one another with these words." Now if good men expect and desire Christ's coming, if they love to think of it, if it comforts them to speak of it, then surely they will rejoice when they see it. Nor will this joy be checked by any guilty fears or anxieties; for in their Judge they will see their Savior, whose love for them passeth knowledge.

2. But while all the faithful servants of Christ will contemplate him with joy unspeakable and full of glory, all of a different character will witness his coming with unutterable horror, anguish, and despair. All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. These effects of his coming are still more forcibly described in a succeeding chapter. I beheld, says the Apostle, and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand! It seems to be clearly intimated that the sight of Christ, at his second coming, will be terrible to all, or nearly all, who are found alive in the world, because all, or nearly all, who are then found alive, will be wicked men. When the Son of man cometh, says our Savior, will he find faith on the earth? That is, will be find many who believe in him, and expect his coming?—a mode of expression which forcibly intimates that he will not. In another passage, he teaches us, that, at his second coming, he will find the world in the

same situation in which it was found by the flood, in the days of Noah, and in which Sodom was in the days of Lot. They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, and knew not, till the day in which Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

It is evident that at the second coming of Christ there will be very little religion found in the world. But it may be asked, how does this representation agree with the many predictions which assure us that religion is yet to prevail, in a far greater degree than it ever has done, and that the knowledge of God shall fill the earth, even as the waters cover the sea? We shall find an answer to this question in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. We are there taught that the great tempter shall be bound for a thousand years; and, in consequence, religion will almost universally prevail. To this period all the passages which speak of the great extension of Christ's kingdom refer. But after the expiration of this period, the great adversary will be suffered to renew his temptations; the consequence will be a great and almost universal apostacy. Then will be seen the signs of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. And who can doubt that such a sight, bursting upon men immersed in worldly cares and pleasures, or engaged in opposing the cause of Christ, will throw them into an agony of consternation and distress?

Suppose that this event should take place now. Can you doubt that many of this congregation would be distracted with guilty fear and remorse; and that all sinners, in all parts of the world, would be affected in a similar manner?

It is not, however, to those only who are found alive in the world that this sight will prove terrible. All the sinful dead will then be roused; for all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. And O, how different will be the appearance of these two classes! The former, with glorious bodies, resembling that of their Savior, will shine forth like the sun, while the latter, dark and gloomy as night, will express nothing but fear and rage, envy and despair. Then will the prediction be fulfilled which says, Ye shall see a difference made between the righteous and the wicked..

So certainly then as the Bible is the word of God, so certainly will *your* eyes see the Lord Jesus Christ coming in the clouds of heaven.

The bright dazzling cloud discloses a great white throne, where sits the man Christ Jesus. Every eye sees him, every heart knows him. Now is heard the voice of the Omnipotent, summoning the dead to rise and come to judgment. At the same moment a change, equivalent to that occasioned by death, is effected by Almighty power on the bodies of the living. Their mortal bodies put on immortality, and are thus prepared to sustain a weight of glory, or of wretchedness, which flesh and blood could not endure. And where now are the pomps, the honors, the riches and pleasures of this world, which yesterday appeared so dazzling? Has not all their brightness faded, even in your estimation? Ought they not to appear as vanity to him who looks for such a spectacle as this? Christian, if you would gain more and greater victories over the world, than you ever have done, bring this scene often before the eye of your mind and gaze upon it till you become blind to all earthly glory.

3. Shall we all see this great sight? and will it affect us according to our characters? Let us then inquire how it would affect us should it now appear? You cannot but be sensible, that, if you have lived a careless, irreligious life, if your sins are not pardoned, if you are conscious that you have not faithfully served Christ, his coming would fill you with guilty apprehension, remorse, and despair. On the contrary, if you are the faithful servants of Christ; if you are looking and longing for his appearing; if you have the testimony of your own consciences, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, you have had your conversa-

tion in the world; then you could witness his approach with joy, and lift up your heads triumphantly, knowing that your redemption was drawing nigh. O, then, if any of you are not prepared to meet the Judge in peace, let it be your great care to become prepared. If any of you are prepared for this event, live as becometh those who expect it. Remember, that your Master's words are, Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

THE ENGINEERING OF ETERNITY.

JOHN ROBERTSON.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.—II. Timothy ii: 19.

A disease very common among occupants of the pulpit, they tell us, is "ministerial sore throat." I will tell you of a disease among them more common, more pitiable, and more deadly than that—it is *ministerial sore heart!* Ill of this "cardiac affection" is Timothy to-night. Bickering has begun in his congregation. Big men according to their own estimate are Hymenæus and Philetus. Now the one never-failing result of fearless faithful preaching has come to pass at Ephesus; "the offense of the cross" has arrived. This Hymenæus-Philetus party has become a scourge in the congregation's side, a thorn in the minister's eye. Timothy is reaping the tares that every servant of Christ has to reap in his harvest of faithful dealing. The bright ideal of Timothy's ordination-day has disappeared like the glowing saffron of sunrise in a close cloud of dank chilling mist. The castle-building of his sanctified imagination has crashed to pieces at his feet, and he feels well-nigh choked with the dust and the stour of the fall. Poor sad Timothy to-night, ill of the ministerial sore heart! Behold at the door a messenger from "Paul the aged," Paul the prisoner, Paul the great apostle, Paul thy heart-fond father in the faith. "Cheer up," runs the letter, "I have heard of thy trouble, but no strange thing has happened thee. It comes to one, it comes to all, it comes to me, it came to the Master himself. Peter told me how one day many of the Lord's disciples were offended, and with angry murmuring went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, 'Will ye also go away?' And Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And what did Jesus answer but this? 'Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' Some have left thee, Timothy, and in leaving thee have left Christ. They went out because they were never *of*. The chaff hath fled with the rush of the wind, but look at thy feet, the pile of rich wheat remains on the granary floor of thy ministry! Dissension and division and desertion around thee, 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, Thy Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' Only the unconverted and the carnal have gone; as for Hymenæus, Philetus & Co., let them dance off to the devil!

His they are, and him they serve, and to him are they delivered. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Amen."

You have been out on a winter's night, and have looked above to the twinkling lift. The great dome of darkness is in its place riveted to the horizon, and the burning spheres are all marshaled in order on the black midnight bosom. Suddenly one of the bright orbs seems to leave its socket and dart downwards to earth, leaving behind it a blazing track. You look, and you say in a common saying, "Ah! there's a falling star!" A falling star? A star? It is only a meteor. It is no star. The stars, they are all there on high. Not one the fewer in their innumerable number, the great lamps of God are all alit, inextinguishable and immovable at his palace gate. No, that you see in its shining tumble is but a poor miserable splinter from this revolving mud-heap. That is of the earth earthy. So it is in the spiritual sky; so it was in the Church of Ephesus. Hymenæus and Philetus, with great noise and display of assertive dazzle, have seceded from their midst, and Timothy is now not to bother himself about those seemingly "falling stars" in his congregational firmament. Paul bids him remember that the meteors alone depart and descend and disappear. The star is a star and shines on for ever, for Christ has given it light. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Paul the aged has thus comforted Timothy the young. What is the foundation of God? Let us try to get at its comforting truth, and may God the Holy Spirit help us in our search!

I. *The Foundation.* "The foundation of God standeth sure."

Talking some time ago to an architect from Hull, he told me that in that town they could not possibly rear a building such as some of the great massive stone-block piles of our Northern Granite City. "There is no foundation," were his words. Hull squats on the ancient sandbanks of the river Humber. Shifty, fickle, unstable sand! "There is no foundation." *Sacramentarianism,* so subtly increasing to-day, is just such a sand-bank, and on this, voices intoning by the ten thousand advise you to build. Beware, beware! "There is no foundation." It is of man, not of God. The sacraments seal grace, but grace must first be there to seal. "There is no foundation," and when the house falls, great is the fall thereof. In France you notice below the knob of a bell-pull on the doors of the cathedrals and churches this boldly-inscribed inscription, *"Night-bell for the Sacraments."* Dying churchly sinner, dark night in the streets of the city, but a darker night in thy priestly-poisoned departing soul! O awful madness! to cram eternity into a dying gasp, and to build eternity on a half-crown's worth of professional priestly Sacramentarianism. However, like a chemist's search for the presence of the acid with the blue litmus paper, we can detect a trace of Sacramentarianism in our Presbyterian custom and habit. Here it is: In an ordinary country parish the communicants are entered on the official records as 2,000. On an ordinary Sabbath census the church, and you will find the attendance not a tenth of that. In Scotland the man is happy who preaches to a couple of hundreds. Now, let *"Saecramint Sawbath"* come round, and lo! "the gathering of the clans!" From high hill and deep glen they come; the 2,000, young and old, wend their way to the house of God. How is all this? The "Saecramint" to-day is to swing them on by grace conferred to the next communion, a whole year before them! Build on sitting down at the Lord's table, will you? Not that is "the foundation of God."

Again, in the "Black Country," and in some other parts of England, you find whole towns tumbling together. Northwich, the salt-center in Cheshire, looks like a shock-shaken paralytic. What in all the world is the matter? What is wrong with the buildings? The *foundation;* the earth has been mined and tunneled below for its hidden treasures. Only a thin skin is the ground above this hollowed-out vacuum

Here again "there is no foundation." Anything like this in the spiritual world? Yea, verily. The common profession of the Lord Jesus Christ by the lip of a formal adherence to his visible church. Coming to the communicants' class and "joining the church" when you are big enough and old enough for the common custom. A fair like foundation to build upon, but where grace has not solidified lip and life into an indivisible whole, it is but a thin sheet of dangerous deception. Below it has been scooped out by that ever-working borer—the world. "There is no foundation." To build thereon is eternal ruin. Are you just a "good Christian" in Scotland for the same reason you'd be a good Hindoo in India, or a good bower-down to a carved-out stick in the wilds of Africa, just because your father and grandfather have been so before you? Dear, dear soul, on what are you building for eternity? Are you on "the foundation of God" that "standeth sure"?

What then, brethren, is this "foundation of God"? Where be this mighty rock-surface that eternity can build on? It is here, towering up amid the ages, a foundation, solid, enduring, eternal, prepared by God,—it is the Rock of Ages, the glorious person and glorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you build here on this foundation of God, unshaken and unshakable "when rolling years have ceased to move"? This and this alone is "the foundation of God," living saving faith in the Savior of sinners. Do you believe on the Son of God? Have you undergone the second birth of the Holy Ghost? Are you hiding in the rock that is higher than you? Are you building on the foundation of God,—a personal salvation in a personal Savior—Jesus Christ the living Son of the living God?

Yet, after all, the foundation may remain immovable and mighty enough; but if in the storm the tiles go rattling to the ground, the roof get stripped, and the gable and walls give way and rush together in a huddled heap, where's the comfort of a sure-standing foundation? The great bridge at Dundee toppled over and tumbled in the careering tempest of that December night, but the foundation stood firm, and the broken piers kept above the waves as in a protest that they were not to blame. The foundation stood; the structure fell—a Job's comfort be this of the sure-standing foundation! Ah! but he that lays the foundation and pledges his name for that, also builds the building and pledges his name for that too. God is the contractor from foundation to roof, and he completes his contract and stands surety for the result. The stars in their mazy whirl are merely his finger-operation, but the conversion of the soul is his arm-work. God has placed himself for the eternal security of the humblest believer in Christ. Fear not, humble believer, you are safe as almightiness can make you. His contract he completes, for his honor is at stake in it. Oh, so feeble the faith in my poor heart! Oh, so tiny the flicker of grace in my faltering soul! Oh, so trembling the touch of life in my fearing spirit! Yes, but it is of God, and cannot be obliterated! It is the Engineering of Eternity, and nothing can touch it. Is Jesus thy Lord? Oh, yes, yes; "my Lord and my God!" Now then, "how readest thou?" "None can call Jesus Lord but *by the Holy Ghost.*" The Holy Ghost! Ah! here is the safety. Faith is not of earth; it is the product of eternity, and endureth as long as that "golden pavement" and "crystal sea" of the everlasting city of God.

II. *The Inscription.*

In the tree-shadowed nook of "God's acre," where the dead lie, you wander. In the dear country kirk-yard you meditate at the sundown hour when "thought is born." Silence and solemnity surround you, and the soul takes wings and passes beyond the horizon of time. Here is an old gravestone. At the top you read, "Sacred to the memory of,"—but what is that name below? Whose memory was this inscription to perpetuate? Alas! time's grim teeth have been silently gnawing and gnawing for years, and the cunning handiwork of the chiseler is now eaten out, and the pitying moss has drawn its soft clinging veil over the sad decay. You cannot with all your efforts

spell out the sleeper's name. Ah, vain seal! cynical sarcastic words "to the memory of!" Ye have let slip the charge ye have sworn to keep! The name is gone for ever. This is when man's chisel has scraped over the tablet; but let God's finger write as the Ten Words were written on Sinai, and the "Tables of Stone" will break, and the fragments fade and decay, but that writing, never! What he hath written he hath written. Yes; and on this great eternity building of a faith-finishing soul God has stamped his personal seal. The "process of the suns" can bring no obliteration to this. Beyond the wear and tear of Time, above wind and mist and rain and storm, the inscription will never be blotted out. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

Oho, come nigh, then, believer, and read this God-written inscription. For you it is; on you it is Two lines have been carved by God. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal."

1. "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

Brethren, the longer you and I live in this everchanging world, the more chary do we get in the use of the possessive pronouns, "my, mine, thy, thine." Experience has taught us this one thing. "My ship," would the merchant say, and sit and day-dream of the rich cargo of coffer-filling treasure from "the Indies of the blest." God listens to the foolhardy boast, and the two ships in the fog try to cross at the same point at the same time, and with the awful collision, they plunge with their precious all to the bottom of the deep. Never, you merchant, say "mine" again! "My bank-balance," and the columns of an eager addition are run up, and the eye glistens at the sum-total of clinking golden coin. Whispering to-day on the stock exchange! Oh, what has happened? The City of Glasgow Bank is down! Ah! never say "mine" again. "My boy," and you stroke the yellow curls and you clap your bonny treasure to your loving bosom. My dear, dear sonnie! Hush in the nursery! no little feet pattering! no prattling laugh! A little coffin has been carried from the house, and you sit in the silence with a breaking heart. Ay, "awa' for ever!" Never say "my boy" again. He is not yours; he is God's, and oh! for God's sake, take care of the loan. The possessive pronouns belong to God alone. "My" and "mine" are only for him to say, not for you. The word is "His." "The Lord knoweth them that are his." So the Lord has property in this world. The devil dare not run up to the mast-head the pirate's black flag of exclusive defiant possession. The Lord has possession on this sin-sodden earth, and he will look after it, never fear. "The Lord knoweth," that is, not merely runneth over in reckoning, as the eager-eyed miser yon golden heap he cannot keep from speedy flight. The word "knoweth" means graspeth, embraceth, pledgeth, looketh after, standeth surety for, keepeth. Ah! yes, poor doubting believer; God hath sworn a mighty oath to keep thee, and concerning thee his highest honor is to-day at stake. He hath said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." "The Lord knoweth them that are his," "knoweth" with all the assurance and power of the pledging of infinite love. Gibraltar is a barren rock on the shores of Spain, but it belongs to England. Only a few hundred paces in breadth, of no material worth at all. Forgotten surely will be this wave-washed tip of foreign stone. Nay! let another flag than the Union Jack this night wave its folds across the beetling cliff and at the first click of the telegraph needle in the Foreign Office in London, the whole mighty ironclad force of our Thunderers and Devastations, the whole ponderous line of the men-o'-war and battle-ships of Great Britain will steam at once to its rescue and defense. And why? Because Great Britain "knoweth" the Rock. It is a possession of our country, and the whole honor of the United Kingdom is pledged for its inviolate keeping. Oh, poor humble downcast child of God, isn't this comfort for you? "The Lord knoweth" you. Oh, eternal safety of the believer in Christ! "The Lord

knoweth them that are his," you are his, he knoweth you, saveth you, keepeth you. O believer, lie down in the green pastures of the covenant and rest you. You are eternally safe; safe as the Almighty can make you. "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

We now come to the second line of the inscription. The first line, as the first everything, is for God, his part of pledging, keeping, and care-taking; the second line is for God's child, for you, the bringing out into the actions of a renewed will of the God-given grace.

2. "Let them that name the name of Christ depart from all iniquity."

You have named the name of Christ, have you thus departed from all iniquity? At the cross you get more than peace, more than pardon. You get *power*. Is your life showing this dynamic side of the Christian life? You label your whirling and plunging engines to be of such and such a "power," 50 horse-power, 100 horse-power, and so on. I wonder at what power your Christ-life and my Christ-life would be reckoned and registered. I am afraid with many of us the power would need to be calculated not by so many horses, but by so many *flies!* Very feeble the most of us are, God help us. The devil despises us, and well he might. Oh, for a baptism of power! Oh, for the Divine vigor, for the Divine *vis* and strength of "Be strong in the Lord" in our dull, dead, leaden lives! All this is in the covenant; all this is really our right. Have you realized this other half of the gospel, the life of power from the living Christ? Are you "free from sin and become a servant to God, having your fruit unto holiness"? You Christian, Christ's one, *you can be kept from sinning,* and it is blasphemy to say otherwise. "Let them that name the name of Christ depart from all iniquity." In the olden times, you know, our sailors had to be at the beck and will of every veering wind that blew. With the bellying canvas they had to tack to every point of the compass. The calm came down, and the sails flapped, and the paralzyed vessel could not move an inch on the slumbering glassy deep. And the tempest would seize the prow and hurl her back in her course for leagues. "Ask me, if you please," said the wind; "ask me, if you please," said the tide. But now no slow, laboring, lumbering tactics like these. In the newspaper yesterday it was advertised that the vessel would leave the dock on Monday at 3 P. M.; on Thursday at noon; any day and every day at the hour you will, the voyage will begin. No mention of the hundred probable hindrances—current and tide and wind and wave. Down in the bowels of that "leviathan afloat" there is a grand force generating; there is the birth of a mighty monster power, and by and by, at the exact hour, out and away that proud vessel will glide. It will laugh at the tide, and will plow its way in the very teeth of the tempest. On and on and on to the "haven desired." Power, power is there, and onward, onward, go! So child of God, at the cross of Christ you get power. From Jesus you get salvation in its fulness as well as its freeness. Stop a moment, you backsliding, sinning Christian; just suffer the Apostle Paul's question. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Oh, how many are the lives among us to-day that really give no other answer than that of those Ephesus lips of old, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Ah! but there is a Holy Ghost! O namer of the name of Christ, cast off the moorings of the world, and put out to sea this moment in the joyful power of the Holy Ghost. "Depart from all iniquity." You can, you can. You remember the French in Paris, besieged and beleaguered by the Germans. The national army is far away, and it is of vital importance to communicate with it. Hemmed in on every side, how to get out is the problem. Try at this gate? Here the charging cavalry! Try at that other gate? There the boom of the big guns! What's to be done? See! on one of the broad squares of the city a balloon. Into the car the messengers leap. Up with a breathless bound, beyond the reach of the thousand whistling bullets from yon German rifles it calmly,

defiantly sails over their heads away to the frontier post. Just so, namer of the name of Christ, are you to depart from all iniquity. You have tried to get out at this gate? The world here. At that gate? The flesh there. Besieged and surrounded by the devil, in dismay you are. Oh, come to Jesus. Get your soul inflated by divine faith. Here and now get Jesus to breathe on you as on the disciples of old, and to say to the very center of your being, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and in this Holy Ghost power you will ascend above them all to the "heavenly places" of the "seated together with Christ," to the safe glory-communion of a God-near and God-filled consecration. If you can't get on, get up. If you can't get out, get up. Up, up! "Excelsior!"

"And when on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be—
Nearer my God to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!"

And now just one closing word to the two groups in the congregation, the saved and the unsaved, the Christian and the Christless.

Unsaved, unconverted soul, I had better shake hands with you and bid you farewell! You are not on the foundation of God, and I can hear the murmur of that coming holy wrath that will sweep you away to a lost for-ever-and-ever. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Jesus Christ." So farewell, a long, a last farewell. You have now to hear that Thunder-Voice say, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Ah! my brother, as I take your hand, I cling to it, and I plead with all the earnestness possible, Oh, come you to Jesus now. Come build for eternity on the "Rock of Ages." Dear, dear soul, hasten to the Cross! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!"

Christian, Christ's one, on the sure-standing foundation of God, known of the Lord, departing in the Holy Ghost from all iniquity, it is true you are not as you might be, but, praise his blessed name! you are not as you once were. You feel the powers of eternity *pro and con,* for and against, of Christ and the devil! Poor feeble, fainting soul, take comfort. You have the Holy Ghost, and all is everlasting well, never fear. A minister friend of mine lately met a feeble old man, a member of his flock. It was a stormy night of wind and rain. "Hallo, friend, this is a terrible night for you to be out in, and laden like that too." "Ay, ay, sir, but *I'll warsle hame!*" Ah! believer in Jesus, buffeted, battled, and beaten in this storm of earthly life, I greet you! It's a rough road this, and a fearful night to be out in. "Ay, ay, sir," you say with the full heart of a God-helped assurance, "but I'll warsle hame! I'll warsle hame!" Hallelujah!

THE FLOOD-TIDE OF POWER.

S. D. GORDON.

God's Highest Ideal.

A flood-tide is a rising tide. Wherever it goes it cleanses and fertilizes and beautifies. For untold centuries Egypt has depended for its very life upon the yearly flood-tide of the Nile. The rich bottom lands of the Connecticut valley are refertilized every spring by that river's flood-tide.

The flood-tide is caused by influences from above. In the ocean and the portions of rivers under its influence, by the heavenly bodies. In the rivers, by the fall of rain and snow swelling the upper streams and lakes.

God's highest ideal for men is frequently expressed under the figure of a river at flood-tide. Ezekiel's vision of the future capital of Israel gives prominence to a wonderful river gradually reaching flood-tide and exerting untold influence.

John's companion vision of the future church in the closing chapters of Revelation finds its radiating center in an equally wonderful river of water of life. Jesus' ideal would put our lives at the flood-tide.

The companion word to surrender is mastery. My surrender to Jesus carries with it his mastery over me. Now, we need to get some clear idea of the *results* of his unrestrained presence. It is not surprising that there have been some mistaken ideas about the results. It has been a common supposition that somehow the baptism of the Holy Spirit is always connected with an evangelistic gift, and with marked success in soul winning. Men have thought of Mr. Moody facing great crowds, who were swayed and melted at his words, and of people in great multitudes accepting Christ. In sharp contrast with such a conception, however, are the results in some of the Spirit-swayed men whom God used in Bible times. Isaiah was called to a service that was barren of results, and Jeremiah's was not only fruitless but with great personal peril. Jesus' public work led through a rough path to a crown of thorns and a cross. Stephen's testimony brought him a storm of stones. And Paul passed through great danger and distress to a cell, and beyond a keen-edged ax. These are leaders among Spirit-filled men.

Paul's teaching in the Corinthian epistle helps one to a clear understanding about results. He explains that while it is one Spirit dwelling in all who acknowledge Jesus as Lord, yet the *evidence* of his presence differs widely in different persons. It is one God working all things in all persons, but with great variety in the gifts bestowed, in the service with which they are intrusted, and in the inner conscious experiences.

Jesus fills us with the same Spirit that filled himself that he may work out in us his own image and ideal, *and* make use of us in his passionate reaching out after others. These results fall into three groups. First—results in the *life,* that is in the inner experiences, and the habits. Second—results in the *personality,* that is in the appearance, and the mental faculties. Third—results in *service.*

Without doubt the first result experienced will be a new sense of *peace:* a glad, quiet stillness of spirit which nothing seems able to disturb.

How many thousands of lips have lovingly lingered over those sweet strong words: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your heart and thought in Christ Jesus." It is God's peace. It acts as an armed guard drawn up around heart and thoughts to keep unrest out. You need not understand in order to experience. Blessed are they that have not understood and yet have yielded and experienced.

With that will come a new intense longing to do the Master's will; to *please him.* As the days come and go this will come to be the master-passion of this new life. It will drive one with a new purpose and zest to studying the one book which tells his will.

With that will come a new desire to talk with this new Master, who talks to you in his word, and is ever at your side sympathetically listening. His book reveals himself. The *pleasure* of praying will grow by leaps and bounds. Nothing so inspires to prayer as reverent listening to his voice.

But there is another result, which is as sure to come as these—*there will be conflict.* You will be tempted more than ever. The act of surrender to Jesus is a notice of fight. You have changed masters, and the discarded master does not let go easily. You will think that you never had so many temptations, so strong so subtle, so trying, so unexpected. But listen—*there will be victory!* Truth goes in pairs. You will be tempted. That is one truth. Its companion truth is this: you will be victorious over temptation. Great and cunning and strong is the tempter. Do not underrate him. But greater is He that is in you. You cannot overrate him. Your own business will be to let him have full control.

Still another result will be a new feeling about *sin.* There will be an increased and increasing *sensitiveness* to sin. It will seem so hateful. You will shrink from contact with it. There will also be a growing sense of the *sinfulness* of that heart of yours, even while you may be having constant victory over temptation. Then, too, there will grow up a yearning, oh! such a heart-yearning as cannot be told in words. *to be pure,* really pure in heart.

Another result will be an intense desire to get others to know your wonderful Master. A desire so strong that all thought of sacrifice will sink out of sight in its achievement. He is such a Master! so loving, so kind, so wondrous! And so many do not know him: have wrong ideas about him. If they only *knew* him—that surely would settle it. And probably these two—the desire to please him, and the desire to get others to know him—will take the *mastery* of your ambition and life.

But all of these and much more is included in one of Paul's packed phrases which may properly be read, "the *love* of God hath *flooded* our hearts through the Holy Spirit given unto us." Rom. v: 5. The all inclusive result is *love.* Every phase of life will become a phase of love. Peace is love resting. Bible study is love reading its lover's letter. Prayer is love keeping tryst. Conflict with sin is love jealously fighting for its lover. Hatred of sin is love shrinking from that which separates from its lover.

Love is revolutionary; it radically changes us. Love is democratic; it ruthlessly levels all class distinctions. Love is intensely practical; it is always hunting something to do. Paul lays great stress on this outer practical side. Do you remember his "fruit of the Spirit?" Gal. 5: 22, 23. It is an analysis of love. While the first three—love, joy, peace—are emotions within, the remaining six are outward toward others; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and then the climax is reached in the last—self-control. And in his great love passage in the first Corinthian epistle (1 Cor. 13), he picks out four of these last six and shows further just what he means by love in its practical working in the life. Long-suffering is repeated, and so is kindness or goodness. Faithfulness is reproduced in "never faileth." Then self-control receives

the emphasis of an eight-fold repetition of "nots." Listen:—"Envieth not," "boasteth not," "not puffed up," "not unseemly," "seeketh not (even) her own," "is not provoked," "taketh not account of evil" (in trying to help others, like Jesus' word "despairing of no man") (Luke 6: 35, R. V., margin), "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness" (that is when the unrighteous is punished, but instead feels sorry for him). What tremendous power of self-mastery in those "nots!" Then the positive side is brought out in four "alls"; two of them—the first and last—passive qualities, "beareth all things," "endureth all things." And in between, two active "hopeth all things," "believeth all things." The passive qualities doing sentinel duty on both sides of the active. These passive traits are intensely active in their passivity. There is a busy time under the surface of those "nots" and "alls." What a wealth of underlying power they reveal! Sometimes folks think it sentimental to talk love. Probably it is of some stuff that shuffles along under that name. But when the Holy Spirit talks about it, and fills our hearts with it there is seen to be an intensely practical passion at work.

Love is not only the finest fruit but it is the final test of a Christian life. How many splendid men of God have seemed to lack here. What a giant of faith and strength Elijah was. Yet listen to him criticising the faithful remnant whom God lovingly defends against his aspersions. God seems to understand his need. He asks him to slip down to Horeb for a new vision of his Master. And then he revealed himself not in whirlwind nor earthquake nor lightning. He doubtless felt at home among these tempestuous outbreaks. They suit his temper. But something startlingly new came to him in that exquisite "sound of gentle stillness," hushing, awing, mellowing, giving a new conception of the dominant heart of his God. Some of us might well drop things, and take a run down to Horeb.

When the Holy Spirit takes possession there is *love,* aye, more, a *flood* of it. Have you ever seen a flood?

Would you care to have a flood-tide of love flush the channelways of your life? It would clean out something you have preferred keeping. Better think a bit before opening the sluice-ways for that flood. But ah! it will sweeten and make fragrant. It will cut new channels, and broaden and deepen old ones. And what a harvest will follow in its wake!

Now note some of the changes *in the personality* which attend the Spirit's unrestrained presence. Without doubt the face will change, though it might be difficult to describe the change. The real secret of winsome beauty is here. That new dominant purpose will modulate the voice, and the whole expression of the face, and the touch of the hand, and the carriage of the body. And yet the one changed will be least conscious of it, if conscious at all. Neither Moses nor Stephen knew of their transfigured faces.

It may be said positively that *the original group of mental faculties remains the same.* There seems to be nothing to indicate that any change takes place in one's natural endowment. No faculty is added that nature had not put there, and certainly none removed.

But it is very clear that there is *a marked development* of these natural gifts, and that this change is brought about by the putting in of *a new and tremendous motive power,* which radically affects everything it touches.

Regarding this development four facts may be noted.

First fact:—*Those faculties or talents which may hitherto have lain latent, unmatured, are aroused into use.* Most men have large undeveloped resources, and endowments. We are strangers to the real possible self within, unconscious of some of the powers with which we are endowed and intrusted. The Holy Spirit, when given a free hand, works out the fulness of the life that has been put in.

Saintly Dr. A. J. Gordon, whose face was as surely transfigured as was Moses' or

Stephen's, used to say that in his earlier years he had no executive ability. When he was offered the chairmanship of the missionary committee of the Baptist Church, he promptly declined as being utterly unfit for such a task. Finally with reluctance he accepted, and for years he guided and moulded with rare sagacity the entire scheme of missionary operation of the great Baptist Church of the North. He was accustomed with rare frankness and modesty to speak of the change in himself as an illustration of how the Spirit develops talents which otherwise had lain unsuspected and unused.

Second fact:—*ALL faculties will be developed to the highest normal pitch.* Not only the undeveloped faculties, but those already developed will know a new life. That new presence within will sharpen the brain, and fire the imagination. It will make the logic keener, the will steadier, the executive faculty more alert.

Why? Not by any magic, but simply and only because man was created to be animated and dominated by the Spirit of God. That is his normal condition. The Spirit of God is his natural atmosphere. The machine works best when run under the inventor's immediate direction. Only as a man is swayed by the Holy Spirit, will his powers rise to their best.

Third fact:—*There will be a gradual bringing back to their normal condition of those faculties which have been dwarfed, or warped, or abnormally developed through sin and selfishness.* Sometimes these moral twists and quirks in our mental faculties are an inheritance through one or more generations.

These results will be gradual, as all of God's processes are, but strictly in proportion as the man yields himself unreservedly to the control of the indwelling Spirit. And the process of doing it will be by the injection of a new and mighty motive power. The self-willed, headstrong man will likely have the toughest time of any. To let his own plan utterly go, and instead fit into a radically different one will shake him up terrifically. But as he yields, and victory comes, he will be charmed to discover that the rarest liberty comes only in perfect obedience to perfect law.

And so every sort of man who has gotten some moral twist or obliquity in his mental make-up will be straightened out to the normal standard of his Maker, *as he allows him to take full control.*

The fourth fact:—*All this growth and development will be strictly along the groove of the man's natural endowment.* The natural mental bent will not be changed though the moral crooks will be straightened out. Peter's rash, self-assertive twists are corrected, but he remains the same Peter mentally. John's intensity which would call down fire to burn up supposed foes is not removed but turned into another channel, and burns itself out in love.

Carey's unusual linguistic talent, William Thaw's genius for business, Mary Lyon's teaching gift are not changed but developed and used. The growth produced by the Spirit's presence is strictly along the groove of the natural gift. But note that in this great variety of natural endowment there is one trait—a moral trait, not a mental—that marks all alike, namely, a pervading purpose that comes to be a passion to do God's will, and get men to know him, and that everything is forced to bend to this dominant purpose. Is not this glorious unity in diversity?

The third group of results affects our service. We will want to serve. Love must act. We must *do* something for our Master. We must do *something* for those around us. There will be a new *spirit* of service. Its peculiar characteristic and charm will be the *heart of love* in it. Love will envelop and undergird and pervade and exude from all service.

The *sort* of service and the *sphere* of service will be left entirely to the direction of the indwelling Holy Spirit, "dividing to every man *as he will.*" There will be no atempt to open doors, but only an entering of *opened* doors.

The Master's say-so is accepted by Spirit-led men as final. He chooses Peter to *open* the door to the outer nations, and Paul to *enter* the opened door. Jesus is the Chief Executive of the campaign through his Spirit. The direction of it belongs to him. He knows best what each one can do. He knows best what needs to be done. His Spirit is in us to administer his plan. And his is a loving, wise will. It can be trusted.

A Spirit-mastered man slowly comes to understand that service now is apprenticeship-service. He is in training for the time when a King shall reign, and will need tested and trusted and trained servants.

Please remember that these are *flood-tide* results. Some good people will never know them except in a very limited way. For they do not open the sluice gates wide enough to let the waters reach flood-tide. *These results will vary in degree with the degree and constancy of the yielding to the Spirit's control.* A full yielding at the start, and constantly continued will bring these results in full measure and without break, though the growth will be gradual. For it is a rising flood, ever increasing in height and depth and sweep and power. Partial surrender will mean only partial results; the largest and finest results come only as the Spirit has full control, for the work is all his, by and with our consent. As the life is yielded fully to the breathing of the Spirit we shall find the peace of God which passeth all understanding, filling the heart; and the power of God that passeth all resisting, flooding the life; and others shall find the beauty of God that passeth all describing, transfiguring the face; and the dewy fragrance of God that passeth all comparing, pervading the personality, though most likely *we* shall not know it.

THE CHRISTIAN NAME.

JAMES STALKER, D.D.

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.—Acts xi: 26.

"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." And what were they called before that? It was nearly twenty years after the commencement of the Christian movement before this name was invented. Our text says, "*The disciples* were called Christians first at Antioch." They were therefore called disciples before they received the name of Christians. This seems to have been the very first name given to the followers of Christ. You know what it means: it means learners or scholars. They were learners, he their Teacher. One of the characters in which our Lord appeared on earth was that of a religious teacher, who gave utterance to thoughts of extraordinary originality; and those who followed him for the purpose of hearing his teaching were called his disciples. This is still a mark of his true followers—they are learners. They are interested in such subjects as Jesus came into the world to speak about—God and the soul, sin and salvation and eternity. Many persons feel such subjects to be wearisome and intolerable. They may be intellectually awake in regard to other subjects, such as business or news, literature or art; or they may be intellectually asleep, caring for no serious thing, but only for food, dress, and amuse-

ment. But Christ's followers are keenly interested in the highest subjects, and one of their chief desires in life is to learn about them. Hence you find them where he is speaking. He speaks in the Bible, and therefore they diligently read it; he speaks through preaching in the house of God, and therefore they wait on it. But the relation of discipleship implied more than mere learning. Disciple is a manlier name than scholar or pupil. We do not speak of the disciples of a schoolmaster, but of the disciples of a thinker or philosopher. Those who were the disciples of Socrates or Plato frequented those great teachers, not so much for the purpose of acquiring knowledge or learning a system, as for the inspiration that is received from contact with an original mind. It is good to be near a big soul; there is nothing better than to feel the pressure of a noble character. It was this that attracted to Socrates the youth of Athens; and Plato's regular name for this teacher's disciples is "those about Socrates." They were near him because from this vicinity to him they found mental and moral stimulus. This, too, was the secret of Jesus; and this is what it means to be a disciple of Christ—it is to be "one of those about him." Those who got near him said to each other, "It is good for us to be here." And this is still the highest blessing of discipleship; it is to be one of those about Jesus, on whom his character impresses itself almost imperceptibly; and who, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.

Another name that was given to the followers of Christ before they were called Christians was *Brethren.* As long as the Master was present the name that prevailed was the one that expressed their immediate relation to him; but when he had departed and they were left to themselves, they began to use the name that expressed their relation to one another. Brethren are of course literally the sons of the same father; and this tie of nature is a very strong one. Even brothers who fall out among themselves, will rally to one another's aid against a common foe. But outside the circle of the family it is difficult to get men to acknowledge the claims of their fellow men on their love and help. Many attempts have therefore been made to make men feel more kindly to one another by forging new bonds of connection among them, and men have called each other brethren because of these relationships. But in comparison with the tie of blood most of these relationships have been but figures of speech. But when the early Christians called each other brethren, it was no mere figure of speech. This is the foundation of the love between Christians—it rests on a life which is common to them and derived from the same Father; and where this life is real, natural, and healthy, it will produce tenderness of feeling, sense of obligation, and the offices of love, as certainly as the blood of a common fatherhood unites those who are brothers in the flesh.

I may mention also two others which occur frequently in the New Testament, although perhaps they came into vogue subsequently to the invention of the name Christian.

When we get into the Epistles of Paul we come pretty often on the name *Believers.* This is a name which we should almost have expected St. Paul to use, for the word believer means one who has faith, and Paul was the Apostle of faith. It may be said to have been the work of his life to set forth the nature and the virtues of faith. He became the herald of faith, and it was not strange that he should fix upon this as the distinguishing mark of those who were really Christ's. But, though we thus associate faith with the preaching of St. Paul, it was not one whit less prominent in the preaching of Christ himself. Faith was what he demanded in all with whom he met; and when it was forthcoming, he welcomed it with irrepressible joy. He came among men with infinitely greater pretensions and promises than anyone else has ever ventured to make, for he promised to save men from their sins. Some denied that he could do anything of the kind; those who credited his testimony, and acted

accordingly, were believers Jesus Christ is still going about through the world; he passes from town to town, from door to door; he comes to your door and mine; he offers to confer on us the greatest boon in existence—to save us from our sins and lead us back to God. Have you credited this offer and closed with it? This is what it is to be a believer.

There is another term which St. Paul uses still oftener than "believers" for the same purpose: it is the word *Saints.* Thus, in writing to the Romans, he addresses himself to the saints at Rome; and in the same way he commences both his Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians; indeed, this name abounds in all his writings.

Saints are possessors of sanctity or holiness; and this implies three things: (1) Separation. This is the first meaning of holiness in every part of Scripture—separation from the common or unclean. The primitive Christians were clearly distinguished from the Jews, if they had previously been Jews, and from the heathen, if they had previously been heathen. Then it implies (2) Purification. To separate one's self from others is an idle thing if it be a mere outward standing apart from them.

It is because the followers of Christ have been purified from the sin of the world that they separate themselves from the world, so that they may be kept pure. But there is (3) Consecration: he who has been purified and separated from the world is sent back into it again, to pervade it with the spirit of Christ, and make it into the kingdom of God. All these elements are united in sainthood—separation, purification, consecration. But does it not astonish us that the name of saints should once have been given to all who named the name of Christ? Saint was once a name convertible with member of the Church. Since then the word has experienced extraordinary vicissitudes. In the Church of Rome it is applied only to a few of the dead who have been deemed worthy of canonization; and among Protestants it is rather a nickname than a name. Of all the signs that mark the followers of Christ holiness is the most august. A single holy life assures hearts made skeptical by the worldliness of an unspiritual society that there still exists on earth the power of God. A single saint will fill a whole parish with belief in religion, as a grain of musk fills a room with its fragrance. I express only my own opinion when I say that in my belief a saint, the humblest saint, is more precious to the Church of God than ecclesiastic, orator, or scholar.

Such then were the names for members of the Church which prevailed in New Testament times—disciples, brethren, believers, saints. But our text commemorates the invention of the name which was destined to overtop them all. In every clime to which the Gospel of Christ has penetrated, *Christian* has come to be the standing name for a follower of him.

In view of its universal adoption, it is singular to note that it was not originally invented by the Christians themselves, and did not for many years after its invention come into common use among them. It occurs only thrice in the New Testament; and in every one of them it is applied to Christians by non-Christians. In fact, it seems at first to have been a byword or nickname flung as a term of reproach at the followers of Christ. To this day, strange to say, the name constructed from the other commonest name of the Savior remains a term of reproach: the word Jesuit is derived from Jesus, as Christian is derived from Christ. But I suspect the name Jesuit will long continue a term of reproach. The name of Christian has had a happier fate. For although originally intended as a term of reproach, after a time the followers of Christ adopted it as their own. It is not the only instance in history in which a name, thrown by opponents as a missile, has been laid hold of by those at whom it has been flung, and borne aloft as the sign beneath which they have fought, or pinned over the heart as the badge of honor.

In the very circumstances of this name's bestowal, indeed, there may seem to have lain a prophecy of its universal diffusion.

"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Antioch, a city of a million inhabitants on the Orontes, was in those days the common mart where East and West met; and in its gay streets representatives elbowed one another of every nation under heaven. The Roman ruled it, the Greek directed its commerce and the Jews' synagogue had its modest place among its temples. A name originated in Antioch might easily be blown over the earth.

Still more clearly did such a prophecy seem to lie in the structure of the word. It certainly did not come from the Jews, for the idea of the Christ embodied in it was to them too sacred to be put into a nickname, or connected with a sect they hated. Their name for Christ's followers was Nazarenes, a word derived from Nazareth, out of which, according to their proverb, no good thing could come. Yet there was a Jewish element in the name, for it was in Israel that the great hope of the Christ arose. There was a Greek element in it too, for the Jewish term Messiah had to be translated into Greek, the universal language of the ancient world, before this new name was coined out of it, the Greek Christos being the equivalent of the Hebrew word which we call Messiah. And there is a Roman element in it also, for the word Christian, whilst having a Greek root, has a Roman ending. In fact, we may guess that it was invented by a Greek-speaking Roman in some gay moment to characterize the strange new Jewish sect that was making a stir in the city. But little did he imagine how long this child of his lips would live, and how far it would travel—far beyond where Rome's eagles ever flew. Thus, just as the inscription in Hebrew and Greek and Latin on the cross of Christ was an unconscious prophecy of the universal significance of what was being transacted on the tree to which it was affixed, so the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin elements in the word, Christians, may seem to have foretold its universal use. But it has owed its universal diffusion chiefly to the fact that it is a better name than any one of those which precede it. It touches the quick more. It emphasizes what is most central and vital in all other names. Are Christians disciples or students of religious truth? The name Christian emphasizes the fact that Christ is the center of all religious truth. Are they brethren? It shows that they are connected with one another only by being first connected with him. Are they believers? He is the prime object of faith. Are they saints? Likeness to him is the standard of sanctity, and union to him its source. Thus this name includes all the rest, and besides, it contains the name that is above every name.

Yet the older names are not useless, though they have been obscured by the new one. They help to define it, for its very universality tends to make it vague and shallow. Who deserves the name of Christian? What is a Christian? He is a disciple: unless he keeps company with Christ, he has no right to the Christian name. He is a brother: if he does not love those who love Christ and help them as he finds opportunity, he is worse than an infidel. He is a believer: he has accepted the testimony borne to Christ, and received him as his all in all. He is a saint: if the beginnings at least of holiness are not in him, if he is not different from the world and growing like to Christ, he has no right to be called a Christian. Christian is both the widest and the narrowest, the most charitable and the most testing of all the designations borne by the professed follower of Christ. It is wider than all our denominational names—Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Presbyterian, Independent—it includes them all. Yet it is narrower than any of them, for many who bear these names have no title to it. John Wesley is said once in a dream to have found himself at the gate of the place of woe, through which multitudes were passing, and he asked the porter who they were. Were there Catholics going in there? Plenty of them. Were there Protestants? Plenty of them. Were there Presbyterians? Plenty of them.

Were there Baptists? Plenty of them. Were there Wesleyans? Plenty of them. Then, in his dream, he was suddenly at the gate of Heaven, and when he asked the porter earnestly: Are there many Wesleyans inside? Not one. Are there many Baptists? Not one. Who then, Presbyterians? Not one. Catholics? Not one. Then who are inside? Only Christians.

Let us try ourselves by these names. Most of us here are members of the Church, and are called by the name of the denomination to which we belong, and perhaps we are proud of it. But what about these older names? Are we disciples, thirsting for the truth as it is in Jesus, living with Christ and learning of him? Are we brethren, purged of selfishness, greed, gossip and injustice, and willingly spending and being spent for the common good; filled with love to all who love the Lord? Are we believers, making the fulness that is in Christ daily more and more our own? Are we saints, so shedding abroad the gentleness and purity of Jesus that others take knowledge of us that we have been with him? Are we Christians? What is your answer? My answer is this: Oh! for more of the disciple's love of truth, more of the love of the brethren, more of the faith of the believer, more of the holiness of the saint. Oh! for more, far more, of Christ!

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